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**HISTORICAL ESSAYS**

BY JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.

BEING

*Selections from "Short Studies  
on Great Subjects."*

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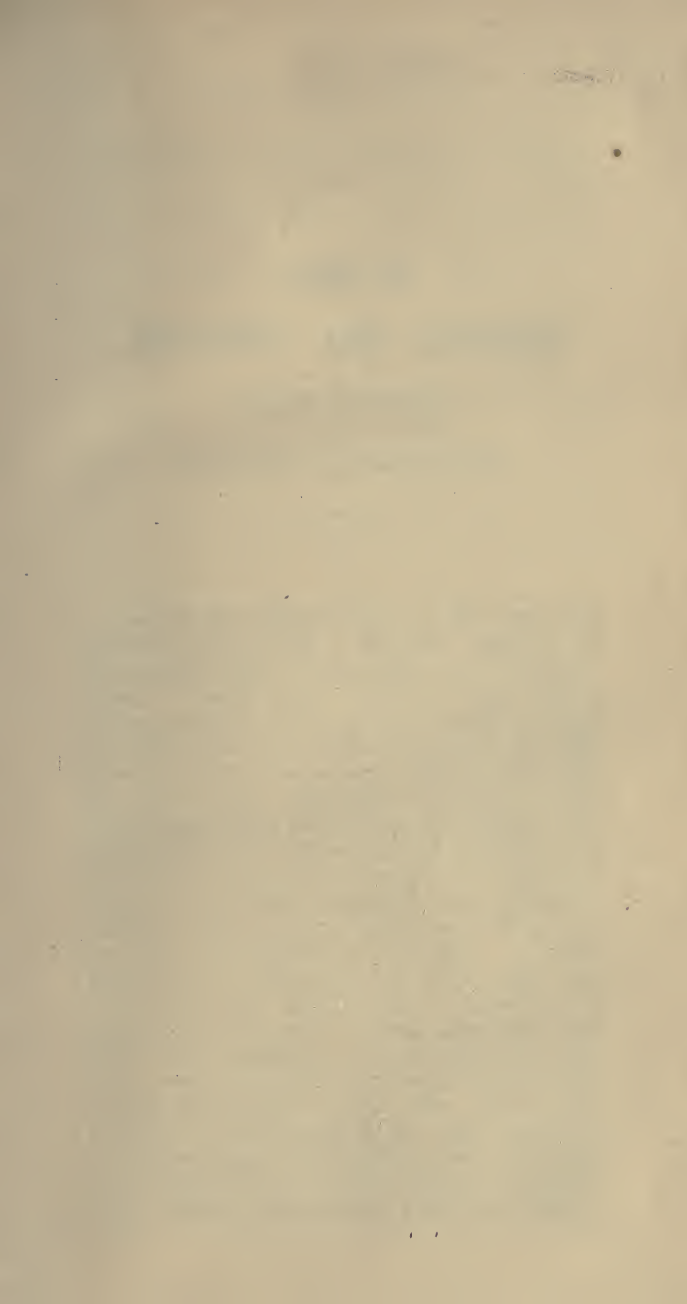
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# TIMES OF ERASMUS AND LUTHER.

THREE LECTURES.

DELIVERED AT NEWCASTLE, 1867.

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## I.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I do not know whether I have made a very wise selection in the subject which I have chosen for these Lectures. There was a time—a time which, measured by the years of our national life, was not so very long ago—when the serious thoughts of mankind were occupied exclusively by religion and politics. The small knowledge which they possessed of other things was tinged by their speculative opinions on the relations of heaven and earth; and, down to the sixteenth century, art, science, scarcely even literature, existed in this country, except as, in some way or other, subordinate to theology. Philosophers—such philosophers as these were—obtained and half deserved the reputation of quacks and conjurers. Astronomy was confused with astrology. The physician's medicines were supposed to be powerless, unless the priests said prayers over them. The great lawyers, the ambassadors, the chief ministers of state, were generally bishops; even the fighting business was not entirely secular. Half-a-dozen Scotch prelates were killed at Flodden;

and, late in the reign of Henry the Eighth, no fitter person could be found than Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry, to take command of the Welsh Marches, and harry the freebooters of Llangollen.

Every single department of intellectual or practical life was penetrated with the beliefs, or was interwoven with the interests, of the clergy; and thus it was that, when differences of religious opinion arose, they split society to its foundations. The lines of cleavage penetrated everywhere, and there were no subjects whatever in which those who disagreed in theology possessed any common concern. When men quarrelled, they quarrelled altogether. The disturbers of settled beliefs were regarded as public enemies who had placed themselves beyond the pale of humanity, and were considered fit only to be destroyed like wild beasts, or trampled out like the seed of a contagion.

Three centuries have passed over our heads since the time of which I am speaking, and the world is so changed that we can hardly recognize it as the same.

The secrets of nature have been opened out to us on a thousand lines; and men of science of all creeds can pursue side by side their common investigations. Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists, contend with each other in honorable rivalry in arts, and literature, and commerce, and industry. They read the same books. They study at the same academies. They have seats in the same senates. They preside together on the judicial bench, and carry on, without jar or difference, the ordinary business of the country.

Those who share the same pursuits are drawn in spite of themselves into sympathy and goodwill. When they are in harmony in so large a part of their occupations, the points of remaining difference lose their venom. Those who thought they hated each other, unconsciously

find themselves friends ; and as far as it affects the world at large, the acrimony of controversy has almost disappeared.

Imagine, if you can, a person being now put to death for a speculative theological opinion. You feel at once, that in the most bigoted country in the world such a thing has become impossible ; and the impossibility is the measure of the alteration which we have all undergone. The Formulas remain as they were on either side—the very same formulas which were once supposed to require these detestable murders. But we have learnt to know each other better. The cords which bind together the brotherhood of mankind are woven of a thousand strands. We do not any more fly apart or become enemies, because, here and there, in one strand out of so many, there are still unsound places.

If I were asked for a distinct proof that Europe was improving and not retrograding, I should find it in this phenomenon. It has not been brought about by controversy. Men are fighting still over the same questions which they began to fight about at the Reformation. Protestant divines have not driven Catholics out of the field, nor Catholics, Protestants. Each polemic writes for his own partisans, and makes no impression on his adversary.

Controversy has kept alive a certain quantity of bitterness ; and that, I suspect, is all that it would accomplish if it continued till the day of judgment. I sometimes, in impatient moments, wish the laity in Europe would treat their controversial divines as two gentlemen once treated their seconds, when they found themselves forced into a duel without knowing what they were quarrelling about.

As the principals were being led up to their places, one of them whispered to the other, ‘ If you will shoot your second, I will shoot mine.’

The reconciliation of parties, if I may use such a word, is no tinkered-up truce, or con-

venient Interim. It is the healthy, silent spontaneous growth of a nobler order of conviction, which has conquered our prejudices even before we knew that they were assailed. This better spirit especially is represented in institutions like the present, which acknowledge no differences of creed—which are constructed on the broadest principles of toleration—and which, therefore, as a rule, are wisely protected from the intrusion of discordant subjects.

They exist, as I understand, to draw men together, not to divide them—to enable us to share together in those topics of universal interest and instruction which all can take pleasure in, and which give offence to none.

If you ask me, then, why I am myself departing from a practice which I admit to be so excellent, I fear that I shall give you rather a lame answer. I might say that I know more about the history of the sixteenth century than I know about anything else. I have spent the best years of my life in reading and writing about it; and if I have anything to tell you worth your hearing, it is probably on that subject.

Or, again, I might say—which is indeed most true—that to the Reformation we can trace, indirectly, the best of those very influences which I have been describing. The Reformation broke the theological shackles in which men's minds were fettered. It set them thinking, and so gave birth to science. The reformers also, without knowing what they were about, taught the lesson of religious toleration. They attempted to supersede one set of dogmas by another. They succeeded with half the world—they failed with the other half. In a little while it became apparent that good men—without ceasing to be good—could think differently about theology, and that goodness, therefore, depended on something else than the holding orthodox opinions.

It is not, however, for either of these reasons



that I am going to talk to you about Martin Luther : nor is toleration of differences of opinion, however excellent it be, the point on which I shall dwell in these Lectures.

Were the Reformation a question merely of opinion, I for one should not have meddled with it, either here or anywhere. I hold that, on the obscure mysteries of faith, every one should be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and that arguments on such matters are either impertinent or useless.

But the Reformation, gentlemen, beyond the region of opinions, was a historical fact—an objective something which may be studied like any of the facts of nature. The Reformers were men of note and distinction, who played a great part for good or evil on the stage of the world. If we except the Apostles, no body of human beings ever printed so deep a mark into the organization of society ; and if there be any value or meaning in history at all, the lives, the actions, the characters of such men as these can be matters of indifference to none of us.

We have not to do with a story which is buried in obscure antiquity. The facts admit of being learnt. The truth, whatever it was, concerns us all equally. If the divisions created by that great convulsion are ever to be obliterated, it will be when we have learnt, each of us, to see the thing as it really was, and not rather some mythical or imaginative version of the thing—such as from our own point of view we like to think it was. Fiction in such matters may be convenient for our immediate theories, but it is certain to avenge itself in the end. We may make our own opinions, but facts were made for us ; and if we evade or deny them, it will be the worse for us.

Unfortunately, the mythical version at present very largely preponderates. Open a Protestant history of the Reformation, and you will find a picture of the world given over to a lying

tyranny—the Christian population of Europe enslaved by a corrupt and degraded priesthood, and the Reformers, with the Bible in their hands, coming to the rescue like angels of light. All is black on one side—all is fair and beautiful on the other.

Turn to a Catholic history of the same events and the same men, and we have before us the Church of the Saints fulfilling quietly its blessed mission in the saving of human souls. Satan a second time enters into Paradise, and a second time with fatal success tempts miserable man to his ruin. He disbelieves his appointed teachers, he aspires after forbidden knowledge, and at once anarchy breaks loose. The seamless robe of the Saviour is rent in pieces, and the earth becomes the habitation of fiends.

Each side tells the story as it prefers to have it; facts, characters, circumstances, are melted in the theological crucible, and cast in moulds diametrically opposite. Nothing remains the same except the names and dates. Each side chooses its own witnesses. Everything is credible which makes for what it calls the truth. Everything is made false which will not fit into its place. ‘Blasphemous fables’ is the usual expression in Protestant controversial books for the accounts given by Catholics. ‘Protestant tradition,’ says an eminent modern Catholic, ‘is based on lying—bold, wholesale, unscrupulous lying.’

Now, depend upon it, there is some human account of the matter different from both these if we could only get at it, and it will be an excellent thing for the world when that human account can be made out. I am not so presumptuous as to suppose that I can give it to you; still less can you expect me to try to do so within the compass of two or three lectures. If I cannot do everything, however, I believe I can do a little; at any rate I can give you a sketch, such as you may place moderate con-

fidence in, of the state of the Church as it was before the Reformation began. I will not expose myself more than I can help to the censure of the divine who was so hard on Protestant tradition. Most of what I shall have to say to you this evening will be taken from the admissions of Catholics themselves, or from official records earlier than the outbreak of the controversy, when there was no temptation to pervert the truth.

Here, obviously, is the first point on which we required accurate information. If all was going on well, the Reformers really and truly told innumerable lies, and deserve all the reprobation which we can give them. If all was not going on well—if, so far from being well, the Church was so corrupt that Europe could bear with it no longer—then clearly a Reformation was necessary of some kind; and we have taken one step towards a fair estimate of the persons concerned in it.

A fair estimate—that, and only that, is what we want. I need hardly observe to you, that opinion in England has been undergoing lately a very considerable alteration about these persons.

Two generations ago, the leading Reformers were looked upon as little less than saints; now a party has risen up who intend, as they frankly tell us, to un-Protestantize the Church of England, who detest Protestantism as a kind of infidelity, who desire simply to reverse everything which the Reformers did.

One of these gentlemen, a clergyman writing lately of Luther, called him a heretic, a heretic fit only to be ranked with—whom, do you think?—Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Joe Smith and Luther—that is the combination with which we are now presented.

The book in which this remarkable statement appeared was presented by two bishops to the Upper House of Convocation. It was received with gracious acknowledgments by

the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was placed solemnly in the library of reference, for that learned body to consult.

So, too, a professor at Oxford, the other day, spoke of Luther as a Philistine—a Philistine meaning an oppressor of the chosen people; the enemy of men of culture and intelligence, such as the professor himself.

One notices these things, not as of much importance in themselves, but as showing which way the stream is running; and, curiously enough, in quite another direction we may see the same phenomenon. Our liberal philosophers, men of high literary power and reputation, looking into the history of Luther, and Calvin, and John Knox, and the rest, find them falling far short of the philosophic ideal—wanting sadly in many qualities which the liberal mind cannot dispense with. They are discovered to be intolerant, dogmatic, narrow-minded, inclined to persecute Catholics as Catholics had persecuted them; to be, in fact, little if at all better than the popes and cardinals whom they were fighting against.

Lord Macaulay can hardly find epithets strong enough to express his contempt for Archbishop Cranmer. Mr. Buckle places Cranmer by the side of Bonner, and hesitates which of the two characters is the more detestable.

An unfavorable estimate of the Reformers, whether just or unjust, is unquestionably gaining ground among our advanced thinkers. A greater man than either Macaulay or Buckle—the German poet, Goethe—says of Luther, that he threw back the intellectual progress of mankind for centuries, by calling in the passions of the multitude to decide on subjects which ought to have been left to the learned. Goethe, in saying this, was alluding especially to Erasmus. Goethe thought that Erasmus, and men like Erasmus, had struck upon the right track; and if they could have retained



the direction of the mind of Europe, there would have been more truth, and less falsehood, among us at this present time. The party hatreds, the theological rivalries, the persecutions, the civil wars, the religious animosities which have so long distracted us, would have been all avoided, and the mind of mankind would have expanded gradually and equally with the growth of knowledge.

Such an opinion, coming from so great a man, is not to be lightly passed over. It will be my endeavor to show you what kind of man Erasmus was, what he was aiming at, what he was doing, and how Luther spoilt his work—if spoiling is the word which we are to use for it.

One caution, however, I must in fairness give you before we proceed further. It lies upon the face of the story, that the Reformers imperfectly understood toleration; but you must keep before you the spirit and temper of the men with whom they had to deal. For themselves, when the movement began, they aimed at nothing but liberty to think and speak their own way. They never dreamt of interfering with others, although they were quite aware that others, when they could, were likely to interfere with them. Lord Macaulay might have remembered that Cranmer was working all his life with the prospect of being burnt alive as his reward—and, as we all know, he actually was burnt alive.

When the Protestant teaching began first to spread in the Netherlands—before one single Catholic had been ill-treated there, before a symptom of a mutinous disposition had shown itself among the people, an edict was issued by the authorities for the suppression of the new opinions.

The terms of this edict I will briefly describe to you.

The inhabitants of the United Provinces were informed that they were to hold and believe the doctrines of the Holy Roman Catho-

lic Church. 'Men and women,' says the edict, 'who disobey this command shall be punished as disturbers of public order. Women who have fallen into heresy shall be buried alive. Men, if they recant, shall lose their heads. If they continue obstinate, they shall be burnt at the stake.

'If man or woman be suspected of heresy, no one shall shelter or protect him or her; and no stranger shall be admitted to lodge in any inn or dwelling-house unless he bring with him a testimonial of orthodoxy from the priest of his parish.

'The Inquisition shall inquire into the private opinions of every person, of whatever degree; and all officers of all kinds shall assist the Inquisition at their peril. Those who know where heretics are concealed, shall denounce them, or they shall suffer as heretics themselves. Heretics (observe the malignity of this paragraph)—heretics who will give up other heretics to justice, shall themselves be pardoned if they will promise to conform for the future.'

Under this edict, in the Netherlands alone, more than fifty thousand human beings, first and last, were deliberately murdered. And, gentlemen, I must say that proceedings of this kind explain and go far to excuse the subsequent intolerance of Protestants.

Intolerance, Mr Gibbon tells us, is a greater crime in a Protestant than a Catholic. Criminal intolerance, as I understand it, is the intolerance of such an edict as that which I have read to you—the unprovoked intolerance of difference of opinion. I conceive that the most enlightened philosopher might have grown hard and narrow-minded if he had suffered under the administration of the Duke of Alva.

Dismissing these considerations, I will now go on with my subject.

Never in all their history, in ancient times or modern, never that we know of, have man-

kind thrown out of themselves anything so grand, so useful, so beautiful, as the Catholic Church once was. In these time of ours, well-regulated selfishness is the recognized rule of action—every one of us is expected to look out first for himself, and take care of his own interests. At the time I speak of, the Church ruled the State with the authority of a conscience; and self-interest, as a motive of action, was only named to be abhorred. The bishops and clergy were regarded freely and simply as the immediate ministers of the Almighty; and they seem to me to have really deserved that high estimate of their character. It was not for the doctrines which they taught only, or chiefly, that they were held in honor. Brave men do not fall down before their fellow-mortals for the words which they speak, or for the rites which they perform. Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, high-mindedness,—these are the qualities before which the free-born races of Europe have been contented to bow; and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found six hundred years ago in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles. They claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority, but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their own lives. They were allowed to rule because they deserved to rule, and in the fulness of revenge kings and nobles bent before a power which was nearer to God than their own. Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed defenceless men reigned supreme by the magic of sanctity. They tamed the fiery northern warriors who had broken in pieces the Roman Empire. They taught them—they brought them really and truly to believe—that they had immortal souls, and that they would one day stand at the awful judgment bar and give account for their lives there. With the brave,

the honest, and the good—with those who had not oppressed the poor nor removed their neighbor's landmark—with those who had been just in all their dealings—with those who had fought against evil, and had tried valiantly to do their Master's will,—at that great day, it would be well. For cowards, for profligates, for those who lived for luxury and pleasure and self-indulgence, there was the blackness of eternal death.

An awful conviction of this tremendous kind the clergy had effectually instilled into the mind of Europe. It was not a *PERHAPS*; it was a certainty. It was not a form of words repeated once a week at church; it was an assurance entertained on all days and in all places, without any particle of doubt. And the effect of such a belief on life and conscience was simply immeasurable.

I do not pretend that the clergy were perfect. They were very far from perfect at the best of times, and the European nations were never completely submissive to them. It would not have been well if they had been. The business of human creatures in this planet is not summed up in the most excellent of priestly catechisms. The world and its concerns continued to interest men, though priests insisted on their nothingness. They could not prevent kings from quarrelling with each other. They could not hinder disputed successions, and civil feuds, and wars, and political conspiracies. What they did do was to shelter the weak from the strong.

In the eyes of the clergy, the serf and his lord stood on the common level of sinful humanity. Into their ranks high birth was no passport. They were themselves for the most part children of the people; and the son of the artisan or peasant rose to the mitre and the triple crown, just as now-a-days the rail-splitter and the tailor become Presidents of the Republic of the West.



The Church was essentially democratic, while at the same time it had the monopoly of learning ; and all the secular power fell to it which learning, combined with sanctity and assisted by superstition, can bestow.

The privileges of the clergy were extraordinary. They were not amenable to the common laws of the land. While they governed the laity, the laity had no power over them. From the throne downwards, every secular office was dependent on the Church. No king was a lawful sovereign till the Church placed the crown upon his head : and what the Church bestowed, the Church claimed the right to take away. The disposition of property was in their hands. No will could be proved except before the bishop or his officer ; and no will was held valid if the testator died out of communion. There were magistrates and courts of law for the offences of the laity. If a priest committed a crime, he was a sacred person. The civil power could not touch him ; he was reserved for his ordinary. Bishops' commissaries sat in town and city, taking cognizance of the moral conduct of every man and woman. Offences against life and property were tried here in England, as now, by the common law ; but the Church Courts dealt with sins—sins of word or act. If a man was profligate or a drunkard ; if he lied or swore ; if he did not come to communion, or held unlawful opinions ; if he was idle or unthrifty ; if he was unkind to his wife or his servants ; if a child was disobedient to his father, or a father cruel to his child ; if a tradesman sold adulterated wares, or used false measures or dishonest weights,—the eye of the parish priest was everywhere, and the Church Court stood always open to examine and to punish.

Imagine what a tremendous power this must have been ! Yet it existed generally in Catholic Europe down to the eve of the Reformation. It could never have established itself at

all unless at one time it had worked beneficially—as the abuse of it was one of the most fatal causes of the Church's fall.

I know nothing in English history much more striking than the answer given by Archbishop Warham to the complaints of the English House of Commons after the fall of Cardinal Wolsey. The House of Commons complained that the clergy made laws in Convocation which the laity were excommunicated if they disobeyed. Yet the laws made by the clergy, the Commons said, were often at variance with the laws of the realm.

What did Warham reply? He said he was sorry for the alleged discrepancy; but inasmuch as the laws made by the clergy were always in conformity with the will of God, the laws of the realm had only to be altered and then the difficulty would vanish.

What must have been the position of the clergy in the fulness of their power, when they could speak thus on the eve of their prostration? You have only to look from a distance at any old-fashioned cathedral city, and you will see in a moment the mediæval relations between Church and State. The cathedral *is* the city. The first object you catch sight of as you approach is the spire tapering into the sky, or the huge towers holding possession of the centre of the landscape—majestically beautiful—imposing by mere size amidst the large forms of Nature herself. As you go nearer the vastness of the building impresses you more and more. The puny dwelling-places of the citizens creep at its feet, the pinnacles are glittering in the tints of the sunset, when down below among the streets and lanes the twilight is darkening. And even now, when the towns are thrice their ancient size, and the houses have stretched upwards from two stories to five; when the great chimneys are vomiting their smoke among the clouds, and the temples of modern industry—the work-



shops and the factories—spread their long fronts before the eye, the cathedral is still the governing form in the picture—the one object which possesses the imagination and refuses to be eclipsed.

As that cathedral was to the old town, so was the Church of the middle ages to the secular institutions of the world. Its very neighborhood was sacred; and its shadow, like the shadow of the Apostles, was a sanctuary. When I look at the new Houses of Parliament in London, I see in them a type of the change which has passed over us. The House of Commons of the Plantagenets sat in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. The Parliament of the Reform Bill, five-and-thirty years ago, debated in St. Stephen's Chapel, the Abbey's small dependency. Now, by the side of the enormous pile which has risen out of that chapel's ashes, the proud Minster itself is dwarfed into insignificance.

Let us turn to another vast feature of the middle ages—I mean the monasteries.

Some person of especial and exceptional holiness has lived or died at a particular spot. He has been distinguished by his wisdom, by his piety, by his active benevolence; and in an age when conjurers and witches were supposed to be helped by the devil to do evil, he, on his part, has been thought to have possessed in larger measure than common men the favor and the grace of heaven. Blessed influences hang about the spot which he has hallowed by his presence. His relics—his household possessions, his books, his clothes, his bones, retain the shadowy sanctity which they received in having once belonged to him. We all set a value, not wholly unreal, on anything which has been the property of a remarkable man. At worst, it is but an exaggeration of natural reverence.

Well, as now-a-days we build monuments to great men, so in the middle ages they built

shrines or chapels on the spots which saints had made holy, and communities of pious people gathered together there—beginning with the personal friends the saint had left behind him—to try to live as he had lived, to do good as he had done good, and to die as he had died. Thus arose religious fraternities—companies of men who desired to devote themselves to goodness—to give up pleasure, and amusement, and self-indulgence, and to spend their lives in prayer and works of charity.

These houses became centres of pious beneficence. The monks, as the brotherhoods were called, were organized in different orders, with some variety of rule, but the broad principle was the same in all. They were to live for others, not for themselves. They took vows of poverty, that they might not be entangled in the pursuit of money. They took vows of chastity, that the care of a family might not distract them from the work which they had undertaken. Their efforts of charity were not limited to this world. Their days were spent in hard bodily labor, in study, or in visiting the sick. At night they were on the stone-floors of their chapels, holding up their withered hands to heaven, interceding for the poor souls who were suffering in purgatory.

The world, as it always will, paid honor to exceptional excellence. The system spread to the furthest limits of Christendom. The religious houses became places of refuge, where men of noble birth, kings and queens and emperors, warriors and statesmen, retired to lay down their splendid cares, and end their days in peace. Those with whom the world had dealt hardly, or those whom it had surfeited with its unsatisfying pleasures, those who were disappointed with earth, and those who were filled with passionate aspirations after heaven, alike found a haven of rest in the quiet cloister. And, gradually, lands came to them, and

wealth, and social dignity—all gratefully extended to men who deserved so well of their fellows; while no landlords were more popular than they, for the sanctity of the monks sheltered their dependents as well as themselves.

Travel now through Ireland, and you will see in the wildest parts of it innumerable remains of religious houses, which had grown up among a people who acknowledged no rule among themselves except the sword, and where every chief made war upon his neighbor as the humor seized him. The monks among the O's and the Mac's were as defenceless as sheep among the wolves; but the wolves spared them for their character. In such a country as Ireland then was, the monasteries could not have survived for a generation but for the enchanted atmosphere which surrounded them.

Of authority, the religious orders were practically independent. They were amenable only to the Pope and to their own superiors. Here in England, the king could not send a commissioner to inspect a monastery, nor even send a policeman to arrest a criminal who had taken shelter within its walls. Archbishops and bishops, powerful as they were, found their authority cease when they entered the gates of a Benedictine or Dominican abbey.

So utterly have times changed, that with your utmost exertions you will hardly be able to picture to yourselves the Catholic Church in the days of its greatness. Our school-books tell us how the Emperor of Germany held the stirrup for Pope Gregory the Seventh to mount his mule; how our own English Henry Plantagenet walked barefoot through the streets of Canterbury, and knelt in the Chapter House for the monks to flog him. The first of these incidents, I was brought up to believe, proved the Pope to be

the man of Sin. Anyhow, they are both facts, and not romances; and you may form some notion from them how high in the World's eyes the Church must have stood.

And be sure it did not achieve that proud position without deserving it. The Teutonic and Latin princes were not credulous fools; and when they submitted, it was to something stronger than themselves—stronger in limb and muscle, or stronger in intellect and character.

So the Church was in its vigor: so the Church was *not* at the opening of the sixteenth century. Power—wealth—security—men are more than mortal if they can resist the temptations to which too much of these expose them. Nor were they the only enemies which undermined the energies of the Catholic clergy. Churches exist in this world to remind us of the eternal laws which we are bound to obey. So far as they do this, they fulfil their end, and are honored in fulfilling it. It would have been better for all of us—it would be better for us now, could Churches keep this their peculiar function steadily and singly before them. Unfortunately, they have preferred in later times the speculative side of things to the practical. They take up into their teaching opinions and theories which are merely ephemeral; which would naturally die out with the progress of knowledge; but, having received a spurious sanctity, prolong their days unseasonably, and become first unmeaning, and then occasions of superstition.

It matters little whether I say a paternoster in English or Latin, so that what is present to my mind is the thought which the words express, and not the words themselves. In these and all languages it is the most beautiful of prayers. But you know that people came to look on a Latin paternoster as the most powerful of spells—potent in heaven, if said straightforward if repeated backward, a charm which no in hell could resist.



So it is in my opinion with all forms—forms of words, or forms of ceremony and ritualism. While the meaning is alive in them, they are not only harmless, but pregnant and life-giving. When we come to think that they possess in themselves material and magical virtues, then the purpose which they answer is to hide God from us and make us practically into Atheists.

This is what I believe to have gradually fallen upon the Catholic Church in the generations which preceded Luther. The body remained; the mind was gone away: the original thought which its symbolism represented was no longer credible to intelligent persons.

The acute were conscious unbelievers. In Italy, when men went to mass they spoke of it as going to a comedy. You may have heard the story of Luther in his younger days saying mass at an altar in Rome, and hearing his fellow-priests muttering at the consecration of the Eucharist, ‘Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain.’

Part of the clergy were profane scoundrels like these; the rest repeated the words of the service, conceiving that they were working a charm. Religion was passing through the transformation which all religions have a tendency to undergo. They cease to be aids and incentives to holy life; they become contrivances rather to enable men to sin, and escape the penalties of sin. Obedience to the law is dispensed with if men will diligently profess certain opinions, or punctually perform certain external duties. However scandalous the moral life, the participation of a particular rite, or the profession of a particular belief, at the moment of death, is held to clear the score.

The powers which had been given to the clergy required for their exercise the highest wisdom and the highest probity. They had fallen at last into the hands of men who possessed considerably less of these qualities than

the laity whom they undertook to govern. They had degraded their conceptions of God ; and, as a necessary consequence, they had degraded their conceptions of man and man's duty. The aspirations after sanctity had disappeared, and instead of them there remained the practical reality of the five senses. The high prelates, the cardinals, the great abbots, were occupied chiefly in maintaining their splendor and luxury. The friars and the secular clergy, following their superiors with shorter steps, indulged themselves in grosser pleasures ; while their spiritual powers, their supposed authority in this world and the next, were turned to account to obtain from the laity the means for their self-indulgence.

The Church forbade the eating of meat on fast days, but the Church was ready with dispensations for those who could afford to pay for them. The Church forbade marriage to the fourth degree of consanguinity, but loving cousins, if they were rich and open-handed, could obtain the Church's consent to their union. There were toll-gates for the priests at every halting-place on the road of life—fees at weddings, fees at funerals, fees whenever an excuse could be found to fasten them. Even when a man was dead he was not safe from plunder, for a mortuary or death present was exacted of his family.

And then those Bishops' Courts, of which I spoke just now : they were founded for the discipline of morality—they were made the instruments of the most detestable extortion. if an impatient layman spoke a disrespectful word of the clergy, he was cited before the bishop's commissary and fined. If he refused to pay he was excommunicated, and excommunication was a poisonous disease. When a poor wretch was under the ban of the Church no tradesman might sell him clothes or food—no friend might relieve him—no human voice might address him, under pain of the same



sentence ; and if he died unreconciled, he died like a dog, without the sacraments, and was refused Christian burial.

The records of some of these courts survive : a glance at their pages will show the principles on which they were worked. When a layman offended, the single object was to make him pay for it. The magistrates could not protect him. If he resisted, and his friends supported him, so much the better, for they were now all in the scrape together. The next step would be to indict them in a body for heresy ; and then, of course, there was nothing for it but to give way, and compound for absolution by money.

It was money—ever money. Even in case of real delinquency, it was still money. Money, not charity, covered the multitude of sins.

I have told you that the clergy were exempt from secular jurisdiction. They claimed to be amenable only to spiritual judges, and they extended the broad fringe of their order till the word clerk was construed to mean any one who could write his name or read a sentence from a book. A robber or a murderer at the assizes had but to show that he possessed either of these qualifications, and he was allowed what was called benefit of clergy. His case was transferred to the Bishop's Court, to an easy judge, who allowed him at once to compound.

Such were the clergy in matters of this world. As religious instructors they appear in colors if possible less attractive.

Practical religion throughout Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century was a very simple affair. I am not going to speak of the mysterious doctrines of the Catholic Church. The creed which it professed in its schools and theological treatises was the same which it professes now, and which it had professed at the time when it was most powerful for good. I do not myself consider that the formulas in which men express their belief are of much

consequence. The question is rather of the thing expressed ; and so long as we find a living consciousness that above the world and above human life there is a righteous God, who will judge men according to their words, whether they say their prayers in Latin or English, whether they call themselves Protestant or call themselves Catholics, appears to me of quite secondary importance. But at the time I speak of, that consciousness no longer existed. The formulas and ceremonies were all in all ; and of God it is hard to say what conceptions men had formed, when they believed that a dead man's relations could buy him out of purgatory—buy him out of purgatory,—for this was the literal truth—by hiring priests to sing masses for his soul.

Religion, in the minds of ordinary people, meant that the keys of the other world were held by the clergy. If a man confessed regularly to his priest, received the sacrament, and was absolved, then all was well with him. His duties consisted in going to confession and to mass. If he committed sins, he was prescribed penances, which could be commuted for money. If he was sick or ill at ease in his mind, he was recommended a pilgrimage—a pilgrimage to a shrine or a holy well, or to some wonder-working image—where, for due consideration, his case would be attended to. It was no use to go to a saint empty-handed. The rule of the Church was, nothing for nothing. At a chapel in Saxony there was an image of a Virgin and Child. If the worshipper came to it with a good handsome offering, the child bowed and was gracious : if the present was unsatisfactory, it turned away its head, and withheld its favors till the purse-strings were untied again.

There was a great rood or crucifix of the same kind at Boxley, in Kent, where the pilgrims went in thousands. This figure used to bow, too, when it was pleased ; and a good

sum of money was sure to secure its good will.

When the Reformation came, and the police looked into the matter, the images were found to be worked with wires and pulleys. The German lady was kept as a curiosity in the cabinet of the Elector of Saxony. Our Boxley rood was brought up and exhibited in Cheapside, and was afterwards torn in pieces by the people.

Nor here again was death the limit of extortion: death was rather the gate of the sphere which the clergy made peculiarly their own. When a man died, his friends were naturally anxious for the fate of his soul. If he died in communion, he was not in the worst place of all. He had not been a saint, and therefore he was not in the best. Therefore he was in purgatory—Purgatory Pickpurse, as our English Latimer called it—and a priest, if properly paid, could get him out,

To be a mass priest, as it was called, was a regular profession, in which, with little trouble, a man could earn a comfortable living. He had only to be ordained and to learn by heart a certain form of words, and that was all the equipment necessary for him. The masses were paid for at so much a dozen, and for every mass that was said, so many years were struck off from the penal period. Two priests were sometimes to be seen muttering away at the opposite ends of the same altar, like a couple of musical boxes playing different parts of the same tune at the same time. It made no difference. The upper powers had what they wanted. If they got the masses, and the priests got the money, all parties concerned were satisfied.

I am speaking of the form which these things assumed in an age of degradation and ignorance. The truest and wisest words ever spoken by man might be abused in the same way.

The Sermon on the Mount or the Apostles'

Creed if recited mechanically, and relied on to work a mechanical effort would be no less perniciously idolatrous.

You can see something of the same kind in a milder form in Spain at the present day. The Spaniards, all of them, high and low, are expected to buy annually, a Pope's Bula or Bull—a small pardon, or indulgence, or plenary remission of sins. The exact meaning of these things is a little obscure; the high authorities themselves do not universally agree about them, except so far as to say that they are of prodigious value of some sort. The orthodox explanation, I believe, is something of this kind. With every sin there is the moral guilt and the temporal penalty. The pardon cannot touch the guilt; but when the guilt is remitted, there is still the penalty. I may ruin my health by a dissolute life; I may repent of my dissoluteness and be forgiven; but the bad health will remain. For bad health, substitute penance in this world and purgatory in the next; and in this sphere the indulgence takes effect.

Such as they are, at any rate, everybody in Spain has these bulls; you buy them in the shops for a shilling apiece.

This is one form of the thing. Again, at the door of a Spanish church you will see hanging on the wall an intimation that whoever will pray so many hours before a particular image shall receive full forgiveness of his sins. Having got that, one might suppose he would be satisfied; but no—if he prays so many more hours, he can get off a hundred years of purgatory, or a thousand, or ten thousand. In one place I remember observing that for a very little trouble a man could escape a hundred and fifty thousand years of purgatory.

What a prospect for the ill-starred Protestant, who will be lucky if he is admitted into purgatory at all.

Again, if you enter a sacristy, you will see a



small board like the notices addressed to parishioners in our vestries. On particular days it is taken out and hung up in the church, and little would a stranger, ignorant of the language, guess the tremendous meaning of that commonplace appearance. On these boards is written 'Hoy se sacan animas,'—'This day, souls are taken out of purgatory.' It is an intimation to every one with a friend in distress that now is his time. You put a shilling in a plate, you give your friend's name, and the thing is done. One wonders why, if purgatory can be sacked so easily, any poor wretch is left to suffer there.

Such practices now-a-days are comparatively innocent, the money asked and given is trifling, and probably no one concerned in the business believes much about it. They serve to show, however, on a small scale, what once went on on an immense scale; and even such as they are, pious Catholics do not much approve of them. They do not venture to say much on the subject directly, but they allow themselves a certain good-humored ridicule. A Spanish novelist of some reputation tells a story of a man coming to a priest on one of these occasions, putting a shilling in the plate, and giving in the name of his friend.

'Is my friend's soul out?' he asked. The priest said it was. 'Quite sure?' the man asked. 'Quite sure,' the priest answered. 'Very well,' said the man, 'if he is out of purgatory they will not put him in again: it is a bad shilling.'

Sadder than all else, even as the most beautiful things are worst in their degradation, was the condition of the monasteries. I am here on delicate ground. The accounts of those institutions, as they existed in England and Germany at the time of their suppression, is so shocking that even impartial writers have hesitated to believe the reports which have come down to us. The laity, we are told,

determined to appropriate the abbey lands, and maligned the monks to justify the spoliation. Were the charge true, the religious orders would still be without excuse, for the whole education of the country was in the hands of the clergy; and they had allowed a whole generation to grow up, which, on this hypothesis, was utterly depraved.

But no such theory can explain away the accumulated testimony which comes to us—exactly alike—from so many sides and witnesses. We are not dependent upon evidence which Catholics can decline to receive. In the reign of our Henry the Seventh the notorious corruption of some of the great abbeys in England brought them under the notice of the Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Morton. The Archbishop, unable to meddle with them by his own authority, obtained the necessary powers from the Pope. He instituted a partial visitation in the neighborhood of London; and the most malignant Protestant never drew such a picture of profligate brutality as Cardinal Morton left behind him in his Register, in a description of the great Abbey of St Albans. I cannot, in a public lecture, give you the faintest idea of what it contains. The monks were bound to celibacy—that is to say, they were not allowed to marry. They were full-fed, idle, and sensual; of sin they thought only as something extremely pleasant, of which they could cleanse one another with a few mumbled words as easily as they could wash their faces in a basin. And their I must leave the matter. Anybody who is curious for particulars may see the original account in Morton's Register, in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth.

A quarter of a century after this there appeared in Germany a book, now called by Catholics an infamous libel, the '*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*,' 'The obscure men,' supposed to be the writers of these epistles,



are monks or students of theology. The letters themselves are written in dog-Latin—a burlesque of the language in which ecclesiastical people then addressed each other. They are sketches, satirical, but not malignant, of the moral and intellectual character of these reverend personages.

On the moral, and by far the most important, side of the matter I am still obliged to be silent; but I can give you a few specimens of the furniture of the theological minds, and of the subjects with which they were occupied.

A student writes to his ghostly father in an agony of distress because he has touched his hat to a Jew. He mistook him for a doctor of divinity; and on the whole, he fears he has committed mortal sin. Can the father absolve him? Can the bishop absolve him? Can the Pope absolve him? His case seems utterly desperate.

Another letter describes a great intellectual riddle, which was argued for four days at the School of Logic at Louvaine. A certain Master of Arts had taken out his degree at Louvaine, Leyden, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, and four other universities. He was thus a member of ten universities. But, how *could* a man be a member of ten universities? A university was a body, and one body might have many members; but how one member could have many bodies, passed comprehension. In such a monstrous anomaly, the member would be the body, and the universities the member, and this would be a scandal to such grave and learned corporations. The holy doctor St. Thomas himself could not make himself into the body of ten universities.

The more the learned men argued, the deeper they floundered, and at length gave up the problem in despair.

Again: a certain professor argued that Julius Cæsar could not have written the book which passed under the name of 'Cæsar's

Commentaries,' because that book is written in Latin, and Latin is a difficult language; and a man whose life is spent in marching and fighting has notoriously no time to learn Latin.

Here is another fellow—a monk this one—describing to a friend the wonderful things which he has seen in Rome.

'You may have heard,' he says, 'how the Pope did possess a monstrous beast called an Elephant. The Pope did entertain for this beast a very great affection, and now behold it is dead. When it fell sick, the Pope called his doctors about him in great sorrow, and said to them, "If it be possible, heal my elephant." Then they gave the elephant a purge, which cost five hundred crowns, but it did not avail, and so the beast departed; and the Pope grieves much for his elephant, for it was indeed a miraculous beast, with a long, long, prodigious long nose; and when it saw the Pope it kneeled down before him and said, with a terrible voice, "Bar, bar, bar!"'

I will not tire you with any more of this nonsense, especially as I cannot give you the really characteristic parts of the book.

I want you to observe, however, what Sir Thomas More says of it, and nobody will question that Sir Thomas More was a good Catholic and a competent witness. 'These epistles,' he says, are the delight of every one. The wise enjoy the wit; the blockheads of monks take them seriously, and believe that they have been written to do them honor. When we laugh, they think we are laughing at the style which they admit to be comical. But they think the style is made up for by the beauty of the sentiment. The scabbard, they say, is rough, but the blade within it is divine. The deliberate idiots would not have found out the jest for themselves in a hundred years."

Well might Erasmus exclaim, 'What fungus could he more stupid? yet these are the Atlases who are to uphold the tottering Church!'

‘The monks had a pleasant time of it,’ says Luther. ‘Every brother had two cans of beer and a quart of wine for his supper, with gingerbread, to make him take to his liquor kindly. Thus the poor things came to look like fiery angels.’

And more gravely, ‘In the cloister rule the seven deadly sins—covetousness, lasciviousness, uncleanness, hate, envy, idleness, and the loathing of the service of God.’

Consider such men as these owning a third, a half, sometimes two-thirds of the land in every country in Europe, and, in addition to their other sins, neglecting all the duties attaching to this property—the woods cut down and sold, the houses falling to ruin—unthrift, neglect, waste everywhere and in everything—the shrewd making the most of their time, which they had sense to see might be a short one—the rest dreaming on in sleepy sensuality, dividing their hours between the chapel, the pothouse, and the brothel.

I do not think that, in its main features, the truth of this sketch can be impugned; and if it be just even in outline, then a reformation of some kind or other was overwhelmingly necessary. Corruption beyond a certain point become unendurable to the coarsest nostril. The constitution of human things cannot away with it.

Something was to be done; but what, or how? There were three possible courses.

Either the ancient discipline of the Church might be restored by the heads of the Church themselves.

Or, secondly, a higher tone of feeling might gradually be introduced among clergy and laity alike, by education and literary culture. The discovery of the printing press had made possible a diffusion of knowledge which had been unattainable in earlier ages. The ecclesiastical constitution, like a sick human body, might

recover its tone if a better diet were prepared for it.

Or, lastly, the common sense of the laity might take the matter at once into their own hands, and make free use of the pruning knife and the sweeping brush. There might be much partial injustice, much violence, much wrong-headedness; but the people would, at any rate, go direct to the point, and the question was whether any other remedy would serve.

The first of these alternatives may at once be dismissed. The heads of the Church were the last persons in the world to discover that anything was wrong. People of that sort always are. For them the thing as it existed answered excellently well. They had boundless wealth, and all but boundless power. What could they ask for more? No monk drowsing over his winepot was less disturbed by anxiety than nine out of ten of the high dignitaries who were living on the eve of the Judgment Day, and believed that their seat was established for them forever.

The character of the great ecclesiastics of that day you may infer from a single example. The Archbishop of Mayence was one of the most enlightened Churchmen in Germany. He was a patron of the Renaissance, a friend of Erasmus, a liberal, an intelligent, and, as times went, and considering his trade, an honorable, high-minded man.

When the Emperor Maximilian died, and the imperial throne was vacant, the Archbishop of Mayence was one of the seven electors who had to choose a new emperor.

There were two competitors—Francis the First and Maximilian's grandson, afterwards the well-known Charles the Fifth.

Well, of the seven electors six were bribed. John Frederick of Saxony, Luther's friend and protector, was the only one of the party who came out of the business with clean hands.

But the Archbishop of Mayence took bribes



six times alternately from both the candidates. He took money as coolly as the most rascally ten-pound householder in Yarmouth or Totnes. and finally drove a hard bargain for his actual vote.

The grape does not grow upon the black-thorn ; nor does healthy reform come from high dignitaries like the Archbishop of Mayence.

The other aspect of the problem I shall consider in the following Lectures.

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## II.

IN the year 1467—the year in which Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy—four years before the great battle of Barnet, which established our own fourth Edward on the English throne—about the time when William Caxton was setting up his printing press at Westminster—there was born at Rotterdam, on the 28th of October, Desiderius Erasmus. His parents, who were middle-class people, were well-to-do in the world. For some reason or other they were prevented from marrying by the interference of relations. The father died soon after in a cloister ; the mother was left with her illegitimate infant, whom she called first, after his father, Gerard ; but afterwards, from his beauty and grace, she changed his name—the words Desiderius Erasmus, one with a Latin, the other with a Greek, derivation, meaning the lovely or delightful one.

Not long after, the mother herself died also. The little Erasmus was the heir of a moderate fortune ; and his guardians desiring to appropriate it to themselves, endeavored to force him into a convent at Brabant.

The thought of living and dying in a house of religion was dreadfully unattractive ; but an

orphan boy's resistance was easily overcome. He was bullied into yielding, and, when about twenty, took the vows.

The life of a monk, which was uninviting on the surface, was not more lovely when seen from within.

'A monk's holy obedience,' Erasmus wrote afterwards, 'consists in—what? In leading an honest, chaste, and sober life? Not the least. In acquiring learning, in study, and industry? Still less. A monk may be a glutton, a drunkard, a whoremonger, an ignorant, stupid, malignant, envious brute, but he has broken no vow, he is within his holy obedience. He has only to be the slave of a superior as good for nothing as himself, and he is an excellent brother.'

The misfortune of his position did not check Erasmus's intellectual growth. He was a brilliant, witty, sarcastic, mischievous youth. He did not trouble himself to pine and mope; but, like a young thoroughbred in a drove of asses, he used his heels pretty freely.

While he played practical jokes upon the unreverend fathers, he distinguished himself equally by his appetite for knowledge. It was the dawn of the Renaissance—the revival of learning. The discovery of printing was reopening to modern Europe the great literature of Greece and Rome, and the writings of the Christian fathers. For studies of this kind, Erasmus, notwithstanding the disadvantages of cowl and frock, displayed extraordinary aptitude. He taught himself Greek, when Greek was the language which, in the opinion of the monks, only the devils spoke in the wrong place. His Latin was as polished as Cicero's; and at length the Archbishop of Cambray heard of him, and sent him to the University of Paris.

At Paris he found a world where life could be sufficiently pleasant, but where his religious habit was every moment in his way. He was a



priest, and so far could not help himself. That ink-spot not all the waters of the German Ocean could wash away. But he did not care for the low debaucheries, where the frock and cowl were at home. His place was in the society of cultivated men, who were glad to know him and to patronize him; so he shook off his order, let his hair grow, and flung away his livery.

The Archbishop's patronage was probably now withdrawn. Life in Paris was expensive, and Erasmus had for several years to struggle with poverty. We see him, however, for the most part—in his early letters—carrying a bold front to fortune; desponding one moment, and larking the next with a Paris grisette; making friends, enjoying good company, enjoying especially good wine when he could get it; and, above all, satiating his literary hunger at the library of the University.

In this condition, when about eight-and-twenty, he made acquaintance with two young English noblemen who were travelling on the Continent, Lord Mountjoy and one of the Greys.

Mountjoy, intensely attracted by his brilliance, took him for his tutor, carried him over to England, and introduced him at the court of Henry the Seventh. At once his fortune was made. He charmed every one, and in turn he was himself delighted with the country and the people. English character, English hospitality, English manners—everything English except the beer—equally pleased him. In the young London men—the lawyers, the noblemen, even in some of the clergy—he found his own passion for learning. Sir Thomas More, who was a few years younger than himself, became his dearest friend; and Warham, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury—Fisher, afterwards Bishop of Rochester—Colet, the famous dean of St Paul's—the great Wolsey himself—recog-

nized and welcomed the rising star of European literature.

Money flowed in upon him. Warham gave him a benefice in Kent, which was afterwards changed to a pension. Prince Henry, when he became King, offered him—kings in those days were not bad friends to literature—Henry offered him, if he would remain in England, a house large enough to be called a palace, and a pension which, converted into our money, would be a thousand pounds a year.

Erasmus, however, was a restless creature, and did not like to be caged or tethered. He declined the King's terms, and Mountjoy settled a pension on him instead. He had now a handsome income, and he understood the art of enjoying it. He moved about as he pleased—now to Cambridge, now to Oxford and, as the humor took him, back again to Paris; now staying with Sir Thomas More at Chelsea, now going a pilgrimage with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb at Canterbury—but always studying, always gathering knowledge, and throwing it out again, steeped in his own mother wit, in shining Essays or Dialogues, which were the delight and the despair of his contemporaries.

Everywhere, in his love of pleasure, in his habits of thought, in his sarcastic scepticism, you see the healthy, clever, well-disposed, tolerant, epicurean, intellectual man of the world.

He went, as I said, with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb. At a shrine about Canterbury he was shown an old shoe which tradition called the Saint's. At the tomb itself, the great sight was a handkerchief which a monk took from among the relics, and offered it to the crowd to kiss. The worshippers touched it in pious adoration, with clasped hands and upturned eyes. If the thing was genuine, as Erasmus observed, it had but served for the archbishop to wipe his nose with—and Dean Colet, a puritan before his time, looked on

with eyes flashing scorn, and scarcely able to keep his hands off the exhibitors. But Erasmus smiled kindly, reflecting that mankind were fools, and in some form or other would remain fools. He took notice only of the pile of gold and jewels, and concluded that so much wealth might prove dangerous to its possessors.

The peculiarities of the English people interested and amused him. 'You are going to England,' he wrote afterwards to a friend; 'you will not fail to be pleased. You will find the great people there most agreeable and gracious; only be careful not to presume upon their intimacy. They will condescend to your level, but do not you therefore suppose that you stand upon theirs. The noble lords are gods in their own eyes.'

'For the other classes, be courteous, give your right hand, do not take the wall, do not push yourself. Smile on whom you please, but trust no one that you do not know; above all, speak no evil of England to them. They are proud of their country above all nations in the world, as they have good reason to be.'

These directions might have been written yesterday. The manners of the ladies have somewhat changed. 'English ladies,' says Erasmus, 'are divinely pretty, and *too* good-natured. They have an excellent custom among them, that wherever you go the girls kiss you. They kiss you when you come, they kiss you when you go, they kiss you at intervening opportunities, and their lips are soft, warm, and delicious.' Pretty well that for a priest!

The custom, perhaps, was not quite so universal as Erasmus would have us believe. His own coaxing ways may have had something to do with it. At any rate, he found England a highly agreeable place of residence.

Meanwhile, his reputation as a writer spread

over the world. Latin—the language in which he wrote—was in universal use. It was the vernacular of the best society in Europe, and no living man was so perfect a master of it. His satire flashed about among all existing institutions, scathing especially his old enemies the monks; while the great secular clergy, who hated the religious orders, were delighted to see them scourged, and themselves to have the reputation of being patrons of toleration and reform.

Erasmus, as he felt his ground more sure under him, obtained from Julius the Second a distinct release from his monastic vows; and, shortly after, when the brilliant Leo succeeded to the tiara, and gathered about him the magnificent cluster of artists who have made his era so illustrious, the new Pope invited Erasmus to visit him at Rome, and become another star in the constellation which surrounded the Papal throne.

Erasmus was at this time forty years old—the age when ambition becomes powerful in men, and takes the place of love of pleasure. He was received at Rome with princely distinction, and he could have asked for nothing—bishoprics, red hats, or red stockings—which would not have been freely given to him if he would have consented to remain.

But he was too considerable a man to be tempted by finery; and the Pope's livery, gorgeous though it might be, was but a livery after all. Nothing which Leo the Tenth could do for Erasmus could add lustre to his coronet. More money he might have had, but of money he had already abundance, and outward dignity would have been dearly bought by gilded chains. He resisted temptation; he preferred the northern air, where he could breathe at liberty, and he returned to England, half inclined to make his home there.

But his own sovereign laid claim to his services; the future emperor recalled him to the



Low Countries, settled a handsome salary upon him, and established him at the University of Louvaine.

He was now in the zenith of his greatness. He had an income as large as many an English nobleman. We find him corresponding with popes, cardinals, kings, and statesmen; and as he grew older, his mind became more fixed upon serious subjects. The ignorance and brutality of the monks, the corruption of the spiritual courts, the absolute irreligion in which the Church was steeped, gave him serious alarm. He had no enthusiasms, no doctrinal fanaticisms, no sectarian beliefs or superstitions. The breadth of his culture, his clear understanding, and the worldly moderation of his temper, seemed to qualify him above living men to conduct a temperate reform. He saw that the system around him was pregnant with danger, and he resolved to devote what remained to him of life to the introduction of a higher tone in the minds of the clergy.

The revival of learning had by this time alarmed the religious orders. Literature and education, beyond the code of the theological text-books, appeared simply devilish to them. When Erasmus returned to Louvaine, the battle was raging over the north of Europe.

The Dominicans at once recognized in Erasmus their most dangerous enemy. At first they tried to compel him to re-enter the order, but, strong in the Pope's dispensation, he was so far able to defy them. They could bark at his heels, but dared not come to closer quarters: and with his temper slightly ruffled, but otherwise contented to despise them, he took up boldly the task which he had set himself.

'We kiss the old shoes of the saints,' he said, 'but we never read their works.' He undertook the enormous labor of editing and translating selections from the writings of the Fathers. The New Testament was as little known as the lost books of Tacitus—all that



the people knew of the Gospels and the Epistles were the passages on which theologians had built up the Catholic formulas. Erasmus published the text, and with it, and to make it intelligible, a series of paraphrases, which rent away the veil of traditional and dogmatic interpretation, and brought the teaching of Christ and the Apostles into their natural relation with reason and conscience.

In all this, although the monks might curse, he had countenance and encouragement from the great ecclesiastics in all parts of Europe—and it is highly curious to see the extreme freedom with which they allowed him to propose to them his plans for a Reformation—we seem to be listening to the wisest of modern broad Churchmen.

To one of his correspondents, an archbishop he writes:—

‘Let us have done with theological refinements. There is an excuse for the Fathers, because the heretics forced them to define particular points ; but every definition is a misfortune, and for us to persevere in the same way is sheer folly. Is no man to be admitted to grace who does not know how the Father differs from the Son, and both from the Spirit ? or how the nativity of the Son differs from the procession of the Spirit ? Unless I forgive my brother his sins against me, God will not forgive me for my sins. Unless I have a pure heart—unless I put away envy, hate, pride, avarice, lust, I shall not see God. But a man is not damned because he cannot tell whether the Spirit has one principle or two. Has he the fruits of the Spirit ? That is the question. Is he patient, kind, good, gentle, modest, temperate, chaste ? Inquire if you will, but do not define. True religion is peace, and we cannot have peace unless we leave the conscience unshackled on obscure points on which certainty is impossible. We hear now of questions being referred to the next Œcumenical

Council—better a great deal refer them to doomsday. Time was, when a man's faith was looked for in his life, not in the Articles which he professed. Necessity first brought Articles upon us, and, ever since, we have refined and refined till Christianity has become a thing of words and creeds. Articles increase—sincerity vanishes away—contention grows hot, and charity grows cold. Then comes in the civil power, with stake and gallows, and men are forced to profess what they do not believe, to pretend to love what in fact they hate, and to say that they understand what in fact has no meaning for them.'

Again, to the Archbishop of Mayence :—

'Reduce the dogmas necessary to be believed, to the smallest possible number ; you can do it without danger to the realities of Christianity. On other points, either discourage inquiry, or leave every one free to believe what he pleases—then we shall have no more quarrels, and religion will again take hold of life. When you have done this, you can correct the abuses of which the world with good reason complains. The unjust judge heard the widow's prayer. You should not shut your ears to the cries of those for whom Christ died. He did not die for the great only, but for the poor and for the lowly. There need be no tumult. Do you only set human affections aside, and let kings and princes lend themselves heartily to the public good. But observe that the monks and friars be allowed no voice ; with these gentlemen the world has borne too long. They care only for their own vanity, their own stomachs, their own power ; and they believe that if the people are enlightened, their kingdom cannot stand.'

Once more, to the Pope himself :—

'Let each man amend first his own wicked life. When he has done that, and will amend his neighbor, let him put on Christian charity, which is severe enough when severity is needed.

If your Holiness give power to men who neither believe in Christ nor care for you, but think only of their own appetites, I fear there will be danger. We can trust your Holiness, but there are bad men who will use your virtues as a cloak for their own malice.'

That the spiritual rulers of Europe should have allowed a man like Erasmus to use language such as this to them is a fact of supreme importance. It explains the feeling of Goethe, that the world would have gone on better had there been no Luther, and that the revival of theological fanaticism did more harm than good.

But the question of questions is, what all this latitudinarian philosophizing, this cultivated epicurean gracefulness, would have come to if left to itself; or rather, what was the effect which it was inevitably producing? If you wish to remove an old building without bringing it in ruins about your ears, you must begin at the top, remove the stones gradually downwards, and touch the foundation last. But latitudinarianism loosens the elementary principles of theology. It destroys the premises on which the dogmatic system rests. It would beg the question to say that this would in itself have been undesirable; but the practical effect of it, as the world then stood, would have only been to make the educated into infidels, and to leave the multitude to a convenient but debasing superstition.

The monks said that Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther hatched a cockatrice. Erasmus resented deeply such an account of his work; but it was true after all. The sceptical philosophy is the most powerful of solvents, but it has no principle of organic life in it; and what of truth there was in Erasmus's teaching had to assume a far other form before it was available for the reinvigoration of religion. He himself, in his clearer moments, felt his own incapacity, and despaired of making an im-

pression on the mass of ignorance with which he saw himself surrounded.

'The stupid monks,' he writes, 'say mass as a cobbler makes a shoe; they come to the altar reeking from their filthy pleasures. Confession with the monks is a cloak to steal the people's money, to rob girls of their virtue, and commit other crimes too horrible to name! Yet these people are the tyrants of Europe. The Pope himself is afraid of them.'

'Beware!' he says to an impetuous friend, 'beware how you offend the monks. You have to do with an enemy that cannot be slain; an order never dies, and they will not rest till they have destroyed you.'

The heads of the Church might listen politely, but Erasmus had no confidence in them. 'Never,' he says, 'was there a time when divines were greater fools, or popes and prelates more worldly.' Germany was about to receive a signal illustration of the improvement which it was to look for from liberalism and intellectual culture.

We are now on the edge of the great conflagration. Here we must leave Erasmus for the present. I must carry you briefly over the history of the other great person who was preparing to play his part on the stage. You have seen something of what Erasmus was; you must turn next to the companion picture of Martin Luther. You will observe in how many points their early experiences touch, as if to show more vividly the contrast between the two men.

Sixteen years after the birth of Erasmus, therefore in the year 1483, Martin Luther came into the world in a peasant's cottage, at Eisleben, in Saxony. By peasant, you need not understand a common boor. Hans Luther, the father, was a thrifty, well-to-do man for his station in life—adroit with his hands, and able to do many useful things, from farm work to digging in the mines. The family life was



strict and stern—rather too stern, as Martin thought in later life.

‘Be temperate with your children,’ he said, long after, to a friend; ‘punish them if they lie or steal, but be just in what you do. It is a lighter sin to take pears and apples than to take money. I shudder when I think of what I went through myself. My mother beat me about some nuts once till the blood came. I had a terrible time of it, but she meant well.’

At school, too, he fell into rough hands, and the recollection of his sufferings made him tender ever after with young boys and girls.

‘Never be hard with children,’ he used to say. ‘Many a fine character has been ruined by the stupid brutality of pedagogues. The parts of speech are a boy’s pillory. I was myself flogged fifteen times in one forenoon over the conjugation of a verb. Punish if you will, but be kind too, and let the sugar-plum go with the rod.’ This is not the language of a demagogue or a fanatic; it is the wise thought of a tender, human-hearted man.

At seventeen, he left school for the University at Erfurt. It was then no shame for a poor scholar to maintain himself by alms. Young Martin had a rich noble voice and a fine ear, and by singing ballads in the streets he found ready friends and help. He was still uncertain with what calling he should take up, when it happened that a young friend was killed at his side by lightning.

Erasmus was a philosopher. A powder magazine was once blown up by lightning in a town where Erasmus was staying, and a house of infamous character was destroyed. The inhabitants saw in what had happened the Divine anger against sin. Erasmus told them that if there was any anger in the matter, it was anger merely with the folly which had stored powder in an exposed situation.

Luther possessed no such premature intelligence. He was distinguished from other boys



only by the greater power of his feelings and the vividness of his imagination. He saw in his friend's death the immediate hand of the great Lord of the universe. His conscience was terrified. A life-long penitence seemed necessary to atone for the faults of his boyhood. He too, like Erasmus, became a monk, not forced into it—for his father knew better what the holy men were like, and had no wish to have son of his among them—but because the Monk of Martin's imagination spent his nights and days upon the stones in prayer; and Martin, in the heat of his repentance, longed to be kneeling at his side.

In this mood he entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt. He was full of an overwhelming sense of his own wretchedness and sinfulness. Like St. Paul, he was crying to be delivered from the body of death which he carried about him. He practiced all possible austerities. He, if no one else, mortified his flesh with fasting. He passed nights in the chancel before the altar, or on his knees on the floor of his cell. He weakened his body till his mind wandered, and he saw ghosts and devils. Above all, he saw the flaming image of his own supposed guilt. God required that he should keep the law in all points. He had not so kept the law—could not so keep the law—and therefore he believed that he was damned. One morning, he was found senseless and seemingly dead; a brother played to him on a flute, and soothed his senses back to consciousness.

It was long since any such phenomenon had appeared among the rosy friars of Erfurt. They could not tell what to make of him. Staupitz, the prior, listened to his accusations of himself in confession. 'My good fellow,' he said, 'don't be so uneasy; you have committed no sins of the least consequence; you have not killed anybody, or committed adultery, or things of that sort. If you sin to some purpose,

it is right that you should be uneasy about it, but don't make mountains out of trifles."

Very curious: to the commonplace man the uncommonplace is forever unintelligible. What was the good of all that excitement—that agony of self-reproach for little things? None at all, if the object is only to be an ordinary good sort of man—if a decent fulfilment of the round of common duties is the be-all and the end-all of human life on earth.

The plague came by-and-by into the town. The commonplace clergy ran away—went to their country-houses, went to the hills, went anywhere—and they wondered in the same way why Luther would not go with them. They admired him and liked him. They told him his life was too precious to be thrown away. He answered, quite simply, that his place was with the sick and dying. A monk's life was no great matter. The sun he did not doubt would continue to shine, whatever became of him. 'I am no St. Paul,' he said, 'I am afraid of death; but there are things worse than death, and if I die, I die.'

Even a Staupitz could not but feel that he had an extraordinary youth in his charge. To divert his mind from feeding upon itself, he devised a mission for him abroad, and brother Martin was despatched on business of the convent to Rome.

Luther too, like Erasmus, was to see Rome; but how different the figures of the two men there! Erasmus goes with servants and horses, the polished, successful man of the world. Martin Luther trudges penniless and barefoot across the Alps, helped to a meal and a night's rest at the monasteries along the road, or begging, if the convents fail him, at the farmhouses.

He was still young, and too much occupied with his own sins to know much of the world outside him. Erasmus had no dreams. He knew the hard truth on most things. But Rome, to Luther's eager hopes, was the city of the

saints, and the court and palace of the Pope fragrant with the odors of Paradise. 'Blessed Rome,' he cried, as he entered the gate—'Blessed Rome, sanctified with the blood of martyrs!'

Alas! the Rome of reality was very far from blessed. He remained long enough to complete his disenchantment. The cardinals, with their gilded chariots and their parasols of peacocks' plumes, were poor representatives of the apostles. The gorgeous churches and more gorgeous rituals, the pagan splendor of the paintings, the heathen gods still almost worshipped in the adoration of the art which had formed them, to Luther, whose heart was heavy with thoughts of man's depravity, were utterly horrible. The name of religion was there: the thinnest veil was scarcely spread over the utter disbelief with which God and Christ were at heart regarded. Culture enough there was. It was the Rome of Raphael and Michael Angelo, of Perugino, and Benvenuto; but to the poor German monk, who had come there to find help for his suffering soul, what was culture?

He fled at the first moment that he could. 'Adieu! Rome,' he said; 'let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome. Everything is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man.' He had no thought of leaving the Roman Church. To a poor monk like him to talk of leaving the Church was like talking of leaping off the planet. But perplexed and troubled he returned to Saxony; and his friend Staupitz, seeing clearly that a monastery was no place for him, recommended him to the Elector as Professor of Philosophy at Wittenberg.

The senate of Wittenberg gave him the pulpit of the town church, and there at once he had room to show what was in him. 'This Monk,' said some one who heard him, 'is a marvellous fellow. He has strange eyes, and will give the doctors trouble by-and-by.'

He had read deeply, especially he had read

that rare and almost unknown book, the 'New Testament.' He was not cultivated like Erasmus. Erasmus spoke the most polished Latin. Luther spoke and wrote his own vernacular German. The latitudinarian philosophy, the analytical acuteness, the sceptical toleration of Erasmus were alike strange and distasteful him. In all things he longed only to know the truth—to shake off and hurl from him lies and humbug.

Superstitious he was. He believed in witches and devils and fairies—a thousand things without basis in fact, which Erasmus passed by in contemptuous indifference. But for things which were really true—true as nothing else in this world, or any world, is true—the justice of God, the infinite excellence of good, the infinite hatefulness of evil—these things he believed and felt with a power of passionate conviction to which the broader, feebler mind of the other was forever a stranger.

We come now to the memorable year 1517, when Luther was thirty-five years old. A new cathedral was in progress at Rome. Michael Angelo had furnished Leo the Tenth the design of St Peter's; and the question of questions was to find money to complete the grandest structure which had ever been erected by man.

Pope Leo was the most polished and cultivated of mankind. The work to be done was to be the most splendid which art could produce. The means to which the Pope had recourse will serve to show us how much all that would have done for us.

You remember what I told you about indulgences. The notable device of his Holiness was to send distinguished persons about Europe with sacks of indulgences. Indulgences and dispensations! Dispensations to eat meat on fast-days—dispensations to marry one's near relation—dispensations for anything and everything which the faithful might wish to purchase who desired forbidden pleasures. The dispensations were simply scandalous. The indul-



gences—well, if a pious Catholic is asked now-a-days what they were, he will say that they were the remission of the penances which the Church inflicts upon earth ; but it is also certain that they would have sold cheap if the people had thought that this was all that they were to get by them. As the thing was represented by the spiritual hawkers who disposed of these wares, they, were letters of credit on heaven. When the great book was opened, the people believed that these papers would be found entered on the right side of the account. Debtor—so many murders, so many robberies, lies, slanders, or debaucheries. Creditor—the merits of the saints placed to the account of the delinquent by the Pope's letters in consideration of value received.

This is the way in which the pardon system was practically worked. This is the way in which it is worked still, where the same superstitions remain.

If one had asked Pope Leo whether he really believed in these pardons of his, he would have said officially that the Church had always held that the Pope had power to grant them.

Had he told the truth, he would have added privately that if the people chose to be fools, it was not for him to disappoint them.

The collection went on. The money of the faithful came in plentifully ; and the pedlers going their rounds appeared at least in Saxony.

The Pope had bought the support of the Archbishop of Mayence, Erasmus's friend, by promising him half the spoil which was gathered in his province. The agent was the Dominican monk Tetzels, whose name has acquired a forlorn notoriety in European history.

His stores were opened in town after town. He entered in state. The streets everywhere were hung with flags. Bells were pealed ; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after him, while he himself sat in a chariot,



with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front of him. The sale-rooms were the churches. The altars were decorated, the candles lighted, the arms of St Peter blazoned conspicuously on the roof. Tetzl from the pulpit explained the efficacy of his medicines ; and if any profane person doubted their power, he was threatened with excommunication.

Acolytes walked through the crowds, clinking their plates and crying, ' Buy ! buy ! ' The business went as merry as a marriage bell till the Dominican came near to Wittenberg.

Half a century before such a spectacle would have excited no particular attention. The few who saw through the imposition would have kept their thoughts to themselves ; the many would have paid their money, and in a month all would have been forgotten.

But the fight between the men of letters and the monks, the writings of Erasmus and Reuchlin, the satires of Ulric von Hutten, had created a silent revolution in the minds of the younger laity.

A generation had grown to manhood of whom the Church authorities knew nothing ; and the whole air of Germany, unsuspected by pope or prelate, was charged with electricity.

Had Luther stood alone, he, too, would probably have remained silent. What was he, a poor, friendless, solitary monk, that he should set himself against the majesty of the triple crown ?

However hateful the walls of a dungeon, a man of sense confined alone there does not dash his hands against the stones.

But Luther knew that his thoughts were the thoughts of thousands. Many wrong things, as we all know, have to be endured in this world. Authority is never very angelic ; and moderate injustice, and a moderate quantity of lies, are more tolerable than anarchy.

But it is with human things as it is with the great icebergs which drift southward out of the

frozen seas. They swim two-thirds under water, and one-third above ; and so long as the equilibrium is sustained, you would think that they were as stable as the rocks. But the seawater is warmer than the air. Hundreds of fathoms down, the tepid current washes the base of the berg. Silently in those far deeps the centre of gravity is changed ; and then, in a moment, with one vast roll, the enormous mass heaves over, and the crystal peaks which had been glancing so proudly in the sunlight are buried in the ocean forever.

Such a process as this had been going on in Germany, and Luther knew it, and knew that the time was come for him to speak. Fear had not kept him back. The danger to himself would be none the less because he would have the people at his side. The fiercer the thunderstorm, the greater peril to the central figure who stands out above the rest exposed to it. But he saw that there was hope at last of a change ; and for himself—as he said in the plague—if he died, he died.

Erasmus admitted frankly for himself that he did not like danger.

‘As to me,’ he wrote to Archbishop Warham, ‘I have no inclination to risk my life for truth. We have not all strength for martyrdom ; and if trouble come, I shall imitate St Peter. Popes and emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better ; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side.’

That is to say, truth was not the first necessity to Erasmus. He would prefer truth, if he could have it. If not, he could get on moderately well upon falsehood. Luther could not. No matter what the danger to himself, if he could smite a lie upon the head and kill it, he was better pleased than by a thousand lives. We hear much of Luther’s doctrine about faith. Stripped of theological verbiage, that doctrine means this.

Reason says that, on the whole, truth and

justice are desirable things. They make men happier in themselves, and make society more prosperous. But there reason ends, and men will not die for principles of utility. Faith says that between truth and lies there is an infinite difference : one is of God, the other of Satan ; one is eternally to be loved, the other eternally to be abhorred. It cannot say why, in language intelligible to reason. It is the voice of the nobler nature in man speaking out of his heart.

While Tetzel, with his bull and his gilt car, was coming to Wittenberg, Luther, loyal still to authority while there was a hope that authority would be on the side of right, wrote to the Archbishop of Mayence to remonstrate.

The Archbishop, as we know, was to have a share of Tetzel's spoils ; and what were the complaints of a poor insignificant monk to a supreme archbishop who was in debt and wanted money ?

The Archbishop of Mayence flung the letter into his waste-paper basket ; and Luther made his solemn appeal from earthly dignitaries to the conscience of the German people. He set up his protest on the church door at Wittenberg ; and, in ninety-five propositions he challenged the Catholic Church to defend Tetzel and his works.

The Pope's indulgences, he said, cannot take away sins. God alone remits sins ; and He pardons those who are penitent, without help from man's absolutions.

The Church may remit penalties which the Church inflicts. But the Church's power is in this world only, and does not reach to purgatory.

If God has thought fit to place a man in purgatory, who shall say that it is good for him to be taken out of purgatory ? who shall say that he himself desires it ?

True repentance does not shrink from chas-

tisement. True repentance rather loves chastisement.

The bishops are asleep. It is better to give to the poor than to buy indulgences ; and he who sees his neighbor in want, and instead of helping his neighbor buys a pardon for himself, is doing what is displeasing to God. Who is this man who dares to say that for so many crowns the soul of a sinner can be made whole.

These, and like these, were Luther's propositions. Little guessed the Catholic prelates the dimensions of the act which had been done. The Pope, when he saw the theses, smiled in good-natured contempt. 'A drunken German wrote them,' he said ; 'when he has slept off his wine, he will be of another mind.'

Tetzel bayed defiance ; the Dominican friars took up the quarrel ; and Hochstrat of Cologne, Reuchlin's enemy, clamored for fire and faggot.

Voice answered voice, The religious houses all Germany over were like kennels of hounds howling to each other across the spiritual waste. If souls could not be sung out of purgatory, their occupation was gone.

Luther wrote to Pope Leo to defend himself ; Leo cited him to answer for his audacity at Rome ; while to the young laymen, to the noble spirits all Europe over, Wittenberg became a beacon of light shining in the universal darkness.

It was a trying time to Luther. Had he been a smaller man, he would have been swept away by his sudden popularity—he would have placed himself at the head of some great democratic movement, and in a few years his name would have disappeared in the noise and smoke of anarchy.

But this was not his nature. His fellow-townsmen were heartily on his side. He remained quietly at his post in the Augustine Church at Wittenberg. If the powers of the world came down upon him and killed him, he



was ready to be killed. Of himself at all times he thought infinitely little ; and he believed that his death would be as serviceable to truth as his life.

Killed undoubtedly he would have been if the clergy could have had their way. It happened, however, that Saxony just then was governed by a prince of no common order. Were all princes like the Elector Frederick, we should have no need of democracy in this world—we should never have heard of democracy. The clergy could not touch Luther against the will of the Wittenberg senate, unless the Elector would help them ; and, to the astonishment of everybody, the Elector was disinclined to consent. The Pope himself wrote to exhort him to his duties. The Elector still hesitated. His professed creed was the creed in which the Church had educated him ; but he had a clear secular understanding outside his formulas. When he read the propositions, they did not seem to him the pernicious things which the monks said they were. ‘There is much in the Bible about Christ,’ he said, ‘but not much about Rome.’ He sent for Erasmus and asked him what he thought about the matter.

The Elector knew to whom he was speaking. He wished for a direct answer, and looked Erasmus full and broad in the face. Erasmus pinched his thin lips together. ‘Luther,’ he said at length, ‘has committed two sins : he has touched the Pope’s crown and the monks’ bellies.’

He generously and strongly urged Frederick not to yield for the present to Pope Leo’s importunacy ; and the Pope was obliged to try less hasty and more formal methods.

He had wished Luther to be sent to him to Rome, where his process would have had a rapid end. As this could not be, the case was transferred to Augsburg, and a cardinal legate was sent from Italy to look into it.



There was no danger of violence at Augsburg. The towns-people there and everywhere were on the side of freedom; and Luther went cheerfully to defend himself. He walked from Wittenberg. You can fancy him still in his monk's brown frock, with all his wardrobe on his back—an apostle of the old sort. The citizens, high and low, attended him to the gates, and followed him along the road, crying 'Luther forever!' 'Nay,' he answered, 'Christ forever!'

The cardinal legate, being reduced to the necessity of politeness, received him civilly. He told him however, simply and briefly, that the Pope insisted on his recantation, and would accept nothing else. Luther requested the cardinal to point out to him where he was wrong. The cardinal waived discussion. 'He was come to command,' he said, 'not to argue.' And Luther had to tell him that it could not be.

Remonstrances, threats, entreaties, even bribes were tried. Hopes of high distinction and reward were held out to him if he would only be reasonable. To the amazement of the proud Italian, a poor peasant's son—a miserable friar of a provincial German town—was prepared to defy the power and resist the prayers of the Sovereign of Christendom.

'What!' said the cardinal at last to him, 'do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend *you*—*you*, a wretched worm like you; I tell you, No! and where will you be then?

Luther answered, 'then, as now, in the hands of Almighty God.'

The court dissolved. The cardinal carried back his report to his master. The Pope, so defied, brought out his thunders; he excommunicated Luther; he wrote again to the Elector, entreating him not to soil his name and lineage by becoming a protector of heretics;

and he required him, without further ceremony, to render up the criminal to justice.

The Elector's power was limited. As yet, the quarrel was simply between Luther and the Pope. The Elector was by no means sure that his bold subject was right—he was only not satisfied that he was wrong—and it was a serious question with him how far he ought to go. The monk might next be placed under the ban of the empire; and if he persisted in protecting him afterwards, Saxony might have all the power of Germany upon it. He did not venture any more to refuse absolutely. He temporized and delayed; while Luther himself, probably at the Elector's instigation, made overtures for peace to the Pope. Saving his duty to Christ, he promised to be for the future an obedient son of the Church, and to say no more about indulgences if Tetzels ceased to defend them.

'My being such a small creature,' Luther said afterwards, 'was a misfortune for the Pope. He despised me too much! What, he thought, could a slave like me do to him—to him, who was the greatest man in all the world? Had he accepted my proposal, he would have extinguished me.'

But the infallible Pope conducted himself like a proud, irascible, exceedingly fallible mortal. To make terms with the town preacher of Wittenberg was too preposterous.

Just then the imperial throne fell vacant; and the pretty scandal I told you of, followed at the choice of his successor. Frederick of Saxony might have been elected if he had liked—and it would have been better for the world perhaps if Frederick had been more ambitious of high dignities—but the Saxon Prince did not care to trouble himself with the imperial sceptre. The election fell on Maximilian's grandson Charles—grandson also of Ferdinand the Catholic—Sovereign of Spain; Sovereign of Burgundy and the Low Countries; Sovereign

of Naples and Sicily ; Sovereign beyond the Atlantic, of the New Empire of the Indies.

No fitter man could have been found to do the business of the Pope. With the empire of Germany added to his inherited dominions, who could resist him ?

To the new Emperor, unless the Elector yielded, Luther's case had now to be referred.

The Elector, if he had wished, could not interfere. Germany was attentive, but motionless. The students, the artisans, the tradesmen, were at heart with the Reformer ; and their enthusiasm could not be wholly repressed. The press grew fertile with pamphlets ; and it was noticed that all the printers and compositors went for Luther. The Catholics could not get their books into type without sending them to France or the Low Countries.

Yet none of the princes except the Elector had as yet shown him favor. The bishops were hostile to a man. The nobles had given no sign ; and their place would be naturally on the side of authority. They had no love for bishops—there was hope in that ; and they looked with no favor on the huge estates of the religious orders. But no one could expect that they would peril their lands and lives for an insignificant monk.

There was an interval of two years before the Emperor was at leisure to take up the question. The time was spent in angry altercation, boding no good for the future.

The Pope issued a second bull condemning Luther and his works. Luther replied by burning the bull in the great square at Wittenberg.

At length in April 1521, the Diet of the Empire assembled at Worms, and Luther was called to defend himself in the presence of Charles the Fifth.

That it should have come to this at all, in days of such high-handed authority, was sufficiently remarkable. It indicated something growing in the minds of men, that the so-called

Church was not to carry things any longer in the old style. Popes and bishops might order, but the laity intended for the future to have opinions of their own how far such orders should be obeyed.

The Pope expected anyhow that the Diet, by fair means or foul, would now rid him of his adversary. The Elector, who knew the ecclesiastical ways of handling such matters, made it a condition of his subject appearing that he should have a safe-conduct, under the Emperor's hand; that Luther, if judgment went against him, should be free for the time to return to the place from which he had come; and that he, the Elector, should determine afterwards what should be done with him.

When the interests of the Church were concerned, safe-conducts, it was too well known, were poor security. Pope Clement the Seventh, a little after, when reproached for breaking a promise, replied with a smile, 'The Pope has power to bind and to loose.' Good, in the eyes of ecclesiastical authorities, meant what was good for the Church; evil, whatever was bad for the Church; and the highest moral obligation became sin when it stood in St. Peter's way.

There had been an outburst of free thought in Bohemia a century and a half before. John Huss, Luther's forerunner, came with a safe-conduct to the Council of Constance; but the bishops ruled that safe-conducts could not protect heretics. They burnt John Huss for all their promises, and they hoped now that so good a Catholic as Charles would follow so excellent a precedent. Pope Leo wrote himself to beg that Luther's safe-conduct should not be observed. The bishops and archbishops, when Charles consulted them, took the same view as the Pope.

'There is something in the office of a bishop,' Luther said, a year or two later, 'which is dreadfully demoralizing. Even good men



change their natures at their consecration; Satan enters into them as he entered into Judas, as soon as they have taken the sop.'

It was most seriously likely that, if Luther trusted himself at the Diet on the faith of his safe-conduct, he would never return alive. Rumors of intended treachery were so strong, that if he refused to go, the Elector meant to stand by him at any cost. Should he appear, or not appear? It was for himself to decide. If he stayed away, judgment would go against him by default. Charles would call out the forces of the empire, and Saxony would be invaded.

Civil war would follow, with insurrection all over Germany, with no certain prospect except bloodshed and misery.

Luther was not a man to expose his country to peril that his own person might escape. He had provoked the storm; and if blood was to be shed, his blood ought at least to be the first. He went. On his way, a friend came to warn him again that foul play was intended, that he was condemned already, that his books had been burnt by the hangman, and that he was a dead man if he proceeded.

Luther trembled—he owned it—but he answered, 'Go to Worms! I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses.'

The roofs, when he came into the city, were crowded, not with devils, but with the inhabitants, all collecting there to see him as he passed. A nobleman gave him shelter for the night; the next day he was led to the Town Hall.

No more notable spectacle had been witnessed in this planet for many a century—not, perhaps, since a greater than Luther stood before the Roman Procurator.

There on the raised dais sat the sovereign of half the world. There on either side of him stood the archbishops, the ministers of state,



the princes of the empire, gathered together to hear and judge the son of a poor miner, who had made the world ring with his name.

The body of the hall was thronged with knights and nobles—stern hard men in dull gleaming armor. Luther, in his brown frock, was led forward between their ranks. The looks which greeted him were not all unfriendly. The first Article of a German credo was belief in *courage*. Germany had had its feuds in times past with Popes of Rome, and they were not without pride that a poor countryman of theirs should have taken by the beard the great Italian priest. They had settled among themselves that, come what would, there should be fair play; and they looked on half admiring, and half in scorn.

As Luther passed up the hall, a steel baron touched him on the shoulder with his gauntlet.

‘Pluck up thy spirit, little monk,’ he said; ‘some of us here have seen warm work in our time, but, by my troth, nor I nor any knight in this company ever needed a stout heart more than thou needest it now. If thou hast faith in these doctrines of thine, little monk, go on, in the name of God.’

‘Yes, in the name of God,’ said Luther, throwing back his head, ‘in the name of God, forward!’

As at Augsburg, one only question was raised. Luther had broken the laws of the Church. He had taught doctrines which the Pope had declared to be false. Would he or would he not retract?

As at Augsburg, he replied briefly that he would retract when his doctrines were not declared to be false merely, but were proved to be false. Then, but not till then. That was his answer, and his last word.

There, as you understand, the heart of the matter indeed rested. In those words lay the whole meaning of the Reformation. Were men to go on forever saying that this and that was

true, because the Pope affirmed it? Or were Pope's decrees thenceforward to be tried like the words of other men—by the ordinary laws of evidence?

It required no great intellect to understand that a Pope's pardon, which you could buy for five shillings, could not really get a soul out of purgatory. It required a quality much rarer than intellect to look such a doctrine in the face—sanctioned as it was by the credulity of ages, and backed by the pomp and pageantry of earthly power—and say to it openly, 'You are a lie.' Cleverness and culture could have given a thousand reasons—they did then and they do now—why an indulgence should be believed in; when honesty and common sense could give but one reason for thinking otherwise. Cleverness and imposture get on excellently well together—imposture and veracity, never.

Luther looked at those wares of Tetzels, and said, 'Your pardons are no pardons at all—no letters of credit on heaven, but flash notes of the Bank of Humbug; and you know it. They did know it. The conscience of every man in Europe answered back, that what Luther said was true.

Bravery, honesty, veracity, these were the qualities which were needed—which were needed then, and are needed always, as the root of all real greatness in man.

The first missionaries of Christianity, when they came among the heathen nations, and found them worshipping idols, did not care much to reason that an image which man had made could not be God. The priests might have been a match for them in reasoning. They walked up to the idol in the presence of its votaries. They threw stones at it, spat upon it, insulted it. 'See, they said, 'I do this to your God. If he is God, let him avenge himself.'

It was a simple argument; always effective;

easy, and yet most difficult. It required merely a readiness to be killed upon the spot by the superstition which it outraged.

And so, and only so, can truth make its way for us in any such matters. The form changes—the thing remains. Superstition, folly, and cunning will go on to the end of time, spinning their poison webs around the consciences of mankind. Courage and veracity—these qualities, and only these, avail to defeat them.

From the moment that Luther left the Emperor's presence a free man the spell of Absolutism was broken, and the victory of the Reformation secured. The ban of the Pope had fallen; the secular arm had been called to interfere; the machinery of authority strained as far as it would bear. The Emperor himself was an unconscious convert to the higher creed. The Pope had urged him to break his word. The Pope had told him that honor was nothing, and morality was nothing, where the interests of orthodoxy were compromised. The Emperor had refused to be tempted into perjury; and, in refusing, had admitted that there was a spiritual power upon the earth, above the Pope, and above him.

The party of the Church felt it so. A plot was formed to assassinate Luther on his return to Saxony. The insulted majesty of Rome could be vindicated at least by the dagger.

But this, too, failed. The Elector heard what was intended. A party of horse, disguised as banditti, waylaid the Reformer upon the road, and carried him off to the castle of Wartburg, where he remained out of harm's way till the general rising of Germany placed him beyond the reach of danger.

At Wartburg for the present evening we leave him.

The Emperor Charles and Luther never met again. The monks of Yuste, who watched on the death-bed of Charles, reported that at the last hour he repented that he had kept his

word, and reproached himself for having allowed the arch-heretic to escape from his hands.

It is possible that, when the candle of life was burning low, and spirit and flesh were failing together, and the air of the sick room was thick and close with the presence of the angel of death, the nobler nature of the Emperor might have yielded to the influences which were around him. His confessor might have thrust into his lips the words which he so wished to hear.

But Charles the Fifth, though a Catholic always, was a Catholic of the old grand type, to whom creed and dogmas were but the robe of a regal humanity. Another story is told of Charles—an authentic story this one—which makes me think that the monks of Yuste mistook or maligned him. Six and twenty years after this scene at Worms, when the then dawning heresy had become broad day; when Luther had gone to his rest—and there had gathered about his name the hate which mean men feel for an enemy who has proved too strong for them—a passing vicissitude in the struggle brought the Emperor at the head of his army to Wittenberg.

The vengeance which the monks could not inflict upon him in life, they proposed to wreak upon his bones.

The Emperor desired to be conducted to Luther's tomb; and as he stood gazing at it, full of many thoughts, some one suggested that the body should be taken up and burnt at the stake in the Market-place.

There was nothing unusual in the proposal; it was the common practice of the Catholic Church with the remains of heretics, who were held unworthy to be left in repose in hallowed ground. There was scarcely, perhaps, another Catholic prince who would have hesitated to comply. But Charles was one of nature's gentlemen; he answered, 'I war not with the dead.'



## III.

WE have now entered upon the movement which broke the power of the Papacy—which swept Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, Scotland, into the stream of revolution, and gave a new direction to the spiritual history of mankind.

You would not thank me if I were to take you out into that troubled ocean. I confine myself, and I wish you to confine your attention, to the two kinds of men who appear as leaders in times of change—of whom Erasmus and Luther are respectively the types.

On one side there are the large-minded latitudinarian philosophers—men who have no confidence in the people—who have no passionate convictions; moderate men, tolerant men, who trust to education, to general progress in knowledge and civilization, to forbearance, to endurance, to time—men who believe that all wholesome reforms proceed downwards from the educated to the multitudes; who regard with contempt, qualified by terror, appeals to the popular conscience or to popular intelligence.

Opposite to these are the men of faith—and by faith I do not mean belief in dogmas, but belief in goodness, belief in justice, in righteousness, above all, belief in truth. Men of faith consider conscience of more importance than knowledge—or rather as a first condition—without which all the knowledge in the world is no use to a man—if he wishes to be indeed a man in any high and noble sense of the word. They are not contented with looking for what may be useful or pleasant to themselves; they look by quite other methods for what is honorable—for what is good—for what is just. They believe that if they can find out that, then at



all hazards, and in spite of all present consequences to themselves, that is to be preferred. If, individually and to themselves, no visible good ever came from it, in this world or in any other, still they would say, "Let us do that and nothing else. Life will be of no value to us if we are to use it only for our own gratification."

The soldier before a battle knows that if he shirks and pretends to be ill, he may escape danger and make sure of his life. There are very few men, indeed, if it comes to that, who would not sooner die ten times over than so dishonor themselves. Men of high moral nature carry out the same principle into the details of their daily life; they do not care to live unless they may live nobly. Like my uncle Toby, they have but one fear—the fear of doing a wrong thing.

I call this faith, because there is no proof, such as will satisfy the scientific inquirer, that there is any such thing as moral truth—any such thing as absolute right and wrong at all. As the Scripture says, 'Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself.' The forces of nature pay no respect to what we call good and evil. Prosperity does not uniformly follow virtue; nor are defeat and failure necessary consequences of vice.

Certain virtues—temperance, industry, and things within reasonable limits—command their reward. Sensuality, idleness, and waste commonly lead to ruin.

But prosperity is consistent with intense worldliness, intense selfishness, intense hardness of heart; while the grander features of human character—self-sacrifice, disregard of pleasure, patriotism, love of knowledge, devotion to any great and good cause—these have no tendency to bring men what is called fortune. They do not even necessarily promote their happiness; for do what they will in this way, the horizon of what they desire to do perpetually flies before them. High hopes and

enthusiasms are generally disappointed in results; and the wrongs, the cruelties, the wretchednesses of all kinds which for ever prevail among mankind—the shortcomings in himself of which he becomes more conscious as he becomes really better—these things, you may be sure, will prevent a noble-minded man from ever being particularly happy.

If you see a man happy, as the world goes—contented with himself and contented with what is round him—such a man may be, and probably is, decent and respectable; but the highest is not in him, and the highest will not come out of him.

Judging merely by outward phenomena—judging merely by what we call reason—you cannot prove that there is any moral government in the world at all, except what men, for their own convenience, introduce into it. Right and wrong resolve themselves into principles of utility and social convenience. Enlightened selfishness prescribes a decent rule of conduct for common purposes; and virtue, by a large school of philosophy, is completely resolved into that.

True, when nations go on long on the selfish hypothesis, they are apt to find at last that they have been mistaken. They find it in bankruptcy of honor and character—in social wreck and dissolution. All lies in serious matters end at last, as Carlyle says, in broken heads. That is the final issue which they are sure to come to in the long run. The Maker of the world does not permit a society to continue which forgets or denies the nobler principles of action. But the end is often long in coming; and these nobler principles are meanwhile *not* provided for us by the inductive philosophy.

Patriotism, for instance, of which we used to think something—a readiness to devote our energies while we live, to devote our lives, if nothing else will serve, to what we call our country—what are we to say of that?

I once asked a distinguished philosopher what he thought of patriotism. He said he thought it was a compound of vanity and superstition; a bad kind of prejudice, which would die out with the growth of reason. My friend believed in the progress of humanity—he could not narrow his sympathies to so small a thing as his own country. I could but say to myself, ‘Thank God, then, we are not yet a nation of philosophers.’

A man who takes up with philosophy like that, may write fine books, and review articles and such like, but at the bottom of him he is a poor caitiff, and there is no more to be said about him.

So when the air is heavy with imposture, and men live only to make money, and the service of God is become a thing of words and ceremonies, and the kingdom of heaven is bought and sold, and all that is high and pure in man is smothered by corruption—fire of the same kind bursts out in higher natures with a fierceness which cannot be controlled; and, confident in truth and right, they call fearlessly on the seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal to rise and stand by them.

They do not ask whether those whom they address have wide knowledge of history, or science or philosophy; they ask rather that they shall be honest, that they shall be brave, that they shall be true to the common light which God has given to all His children. They know well that conscience is no exceptional privilege of the great or the cultivated, that to be generous and unselfish is no prerogative of rank or intellect.

Erasmus considered that, for the vulgar, a lie might be as good as truth, and often better. A lie, ascertained to be a lie, to Luther was deadly poison—poison to all who meddled with.

In his own genuine greatness, he was too humble to draw insolent distinctions in his own

favor; or to believe that any one class on earth is of more importance than another in the eyes of the Great Maker of them all.

Well, then you know what I mean by faith, and what I mean by intellect. It was not that Luther was without intellect. He was less subtle, less learned, than Erasmus; but in mother wit, in elasticity, in force, and imaginative power, he was as able a man as ever lived. Luther created the German language as an instrument of literature. His translation of the Bible is as rich and grand as our own, and his table talk as full of matter as Shakespeare's plays.

Again; you will mistake me if you think I represent Erasmus as a man without conscience, or belief in God and goodness. But in Luther that belief was a certainty; in Erasmus it was only a high probability—and the difference between the two is not merely great, it is infinite. In Luther, it was the root; in Erasmus, it was the flower. In Luther, it was the first principle of life; in Erasmus, it was an inference which might be taken away, and yet leave the world a very tolerable and habitable place after all.

You see the contrast in their early lives. You see Erasmus—light, bright, sarcastic, fond of pleasure, fond of society, fond of wine and kisses, and intellectual talk and polished company. You see Luther throwing himself into the cloister, that he might subdue his will to the will of God; prostrate in prayer, in nights of agony, and distracting his easy-going confessor with the exaggerated scruples of his conscience.

You see it in the effects of their teaching. You see Erasmus addressing himself with persuasive eloquence to kings, and popes, and prelates; and for answer, you see Pope Leo sending Tetzel over Germany with his carriage load of indulgences. You see Erasmus's dearest friend, our own gifted admirable Sir



Thomas More, taking his seat beside the bishops and sending poor Protestant artisans to the stake.

You see Luther, on the other side, standing out before the world, one lone man, with all authority against him—taking lies by the throat, and Europe thrilling at his words, and saying after him, ‘The reign of Imposture shall end.’

Let us follow the course of Erasmus after the tempest had broken.

He knew Luther to be right. Luther had but said what Erasmus had been all his life convinced of, and Luther looked to see him come forward and take his place at his side. Had Erasmus done so, the course of things would have been far happier and better. His prodigious reputation would have given the Reformers the influence with the educated which they had won for themselves with the multitude, and the Pope would have been left without a friend to the north of the Alps. But there would have been some danger—danger to the leaders, if certainty of triumph to the cause—and Erasmus had no gift for martyrdom.

His first impulse was generous. He encouraged the Elector, as we have seen, to protect Luther from the Pope. ‘I looked on Luther,’ he wrote to Duke George of Saxe, ‘as a necessary evil in the corruption of the Church; a medicine, bitter and drastic, from which sounder health would follow.’

And again, more boldly: ‘Luther has taken up the cause of honesty and good sense against abominations which are no longer tolerable. His enemies are men under whose worthlessness the Christian world has groaned too long.’

So to the heads of the Church he wrote, pressing them to be moderate and careful:—

‘I neither approve Luther nor condemn him,’ he said to the Archbishop of Mayence; ‘if he is innocent, he ought not to be oppress-



ed by the factions of the wicked ; if he is in error, he should be answered, not destroyed. The theologians'—observe how true they remain to the universal type in all times and in all countries—'the theologians do not try to answer him. They do but raise an insane and senseless clamor, and shriek and curse. Heresy, heretic, heresiarch, schismatic, Antichrist—these are the words which are in the mouths of all of them ; and, of course, they condemn without reading. I warned them what they were doing. I told them to scream less, and to think more. Luther's life they admit to be innocent and blameless. Such a tragedy I never saw. The most humane men are thirsting for his blood, and they would rather kill him than mend him. The Dominicans are the worst, and are more knaves than fools. In old times, even a heretic was quietly listened to. If he recanted, he was absolved ; if he persisted, he was at worst excommunicated. Now they will have nothing but blood. Not to agree with them is heresy. To know Greek is heresy. To speak good Latin is heresy. Whatever they do not understand is heresy. Learning, they pretend, has given birth to Luther, though Luther has but little of it. Luther thinks more of the Gospel than of scholastic divinity, and that is his crime. This is plain at least, that the best men everywhere are those who are least offended with him.'

Even to Pope Leo, in the midst of his fury, Erasmus wrote bravely ; separating himself from Luther, yet deprecating violence. 'Nothing,' he said, 'would so recommend the new teaching as the howling of fools :' while to a member of Charles's council he insisted that 'severity had been often tried in such cases and had always failed ; unless Luther was encountered calmly and reasonably, a tremendous convulsion was inevitable.'

Wisely said all this, but it presumed that those whom he was addressing were reasonable

men : and high officials, touched in their pride, are a class of persons of whom Solomon may have been thinking when he said, ' Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man rather than a fool in his folly.'

So to Luther, so to the people, Erasmus preached moderation. It was like preaching to the winds in a hurricane. The typhoon itself is not wilder than human creatures when once their passions are stirred. You cannot check them ; but, if you are brave, you can guide them wisely. And this, Erasmus had not the heart to do.

He said at the beginning, ' I will not countenance revolt against authority. A bad government is better than none.' But he said at the same time, ' You bishops, cease to be corrupt : you popes and cardinals, reform your wicked courts : you monks, leave your scandalous lives, and obey the rules of your order, so you may recover the respect of mankind, and be obeyed and loved as before.'

When he found that the case was desperate ; that his exhortations were but words addressed to the winds ; that corruption had tainted the blood ; that there was no hope except in revolution—as, indeed, in his heart he knew from the first that there was none—then his place ought to have been with Luther.

But Erasmus, as the tempest rose, could but stand still in feeble uncertainty. The responsibilities of his reputation weighed him down.

The Lutherans said, ' You believe as we do.' The Catholics said ' You are a Lutheran at heart ; if you are not, prove it by attacking Luther.'

He grew impatient. He told lies. He said he had not read Luther's books, and had no time to read them. What was he, he said, that he should meddle in such a quarrel ? He was the vine and the fig tree of the book of Judges. The trees said to them, Rule over us. The vine and the fig tree answered, they would

not leave their sweetness for such a thankless office. 'I am a poor actor,' he said; 'I prefer to be a spectator of the display.'

But he was sore at heart, and bitter with disappointment. All had been going on so smoothly—literature was reviving, art and science were spreading, the mind of the world was being reformed in the best sense by the classics of Greece and Rome, and now an apple of discord had been flung out into Europe.

The monks who had fought against enlightenment could point to the confusion as a fulfilment of their prophecies; and he, and all that he had done, was brought to disrepute.

To protect himself from the Dominicans, he was forced to pretend to an orthodoxy which he did not possess. Were all true which Luther had written, he pretended that it ought not to have been said, or should have been addressed in a learned language to the refined and educated.

He doubted whether it was not better on the whole to teach the people lies for their good, when truth was beyond their comprehension. Yet he could not for all that wish the Church to be successful.

'I fear for that miserable Luther,' he said, 'the popes and princes are furious with him. His own destruction would be no great matter, but if the monks triumph there will be no bearing them. They will never rest till they have rooted learning out of the land. The Pope expects *me* to write against Luther. The orthodox, it appears, can call him names—call him blockhead, fool, heretic, toadstool, schismatic, and Antichrist—but they must come to me to answer his arguments.'

'Oh! that this had never been,' he wrote to our own Archbishop Warham. 'Now there is no hope for any good. It is all over with quiet learning, thought, piety and progress; violence is on one side and folly on the other; and they

accuse me of having caused it all. If I joined Luther I could only perish with him, and I do not mean to run my neck into a halter. Popes and emperors must decide matters. I will accept what is good, and do as I can with the rest. Peace on any terms is better than the justest war.'

Erasmus never stooped to real baseness. He was too clever, too genuine—he had too great a contempt for worldly greatness. They offered him a bishopric if he would attack Luther. He only laughed at them. What was a bishopric to him? He preferred a quiet life among his books at Louvaine.

But there was no more quiet for Erasmus at Louvaine or anywhere. Here is a scene between him and the Prior of the Dominicans in the presence of the Rector of the University.

The Dominican had preached at Erasmus in the University pulpit. Erasmus complained to the Rector, and the Rector invited the Dominican to defend himself. Erasmus tells the story.

'I sat on one side and the monk on the other, the Rector between us to prevent our scratching.

'The monk asked what the matter was, and said he had done no harm.

'I said he had told lies of me, and that was harm.

'It was after dinner. The holy man was flushed. He turned purple.

'“Why do you abuse monks in your books?” he said.

'“I spoke of your order,” I answered. “I did not mention you. You denounced me by name as a friend of Luther.”

'He raged like a madman. “You are the cause of all this trouble,” he said; “you are a chameleon, you can twist everything.”

'“You see what a fellow he is,” said I, turning to the Rector. “If it comes to calling



names, why I can do that too; but let us be reasonable."

'He still roared and cursed; he vowed he would never rest until he had destroyed Luther.

'I said he might curse Luther till he burst himself if he pleased. I complained of his cursing me.

'He answered, that if I did not agree with Luther, I ought to say so, and write against him.

"Why should I?" urged I. "The quarrel is none of mine. Why should I irritate Luther against me when he has horns and knows how to use them?"

"Well, then," said he, "if you will not write, at least you can say that we Dominicans have had the best of the argument."

"How can I do that?" replied I. "You have burnt his books, but I never heard that you had answered them."

'He almost spat upon me, I understand that there is to be a form of prayer for the conversion of Erasmus and Luther.'

But Erasmus was not to escape so easily. Adrian the Sixth, who succeeded Leo, was his old school-fellow, and implored his assistance in terms which made refusal impossible. Adrian wanted Erasmus to come to him to Rome. He was too wary to walk into the wolf's den. But Adrian required him to write, and reluctantly he felt that he must comply.

What was he to say?

'If his Holiness will set about reform in good earnest,' he wrote to the Pope's secretary, 'and if he will not be too hard on Luther, I may, perhaps, do good; but what Luther writes of the tyranny, the corruption, the covetness of Roman court, would, my friend, that it was not true.'

To Adrian himself, Erasmus addressed a letter really remarkable.

'I cannot go to your Holiness,' he said, 'King



Calculus will not let me. I have dreadful health, which this tornado has not improved. I, who was the favorite of everybody, am now cursed by everybody—at Louvaine by the monks; in Germany by the Lutherans. I have fallen into trouble in my old age, like a mouse into a pot of pitch. You say, Come to Rome; you might as well say to the crab, Fly. The crab says, Give me wings; I say, Give me back my health and my youth. If I write calmly against Luther I shall be called lukewarm; if I write as he does, I shall stir a hornets' nest. People think he can be put down by force. The more force you try, the stronger he will grow. Such disorders cannot be cured in that way. The Wickliffites in England were put down, but the fire smouldered.

'If you mean to use violence you have no need of me; but mark this—if monks and theologians think only of themselves, no good will come of it. Look rather into the causes of all this confusion, and apply your remedies there. Send for the best and wisest men from all parts of Christendom and take their advice.'

Tell a crab to fly. Tell a pope to be reasonable. You must relieve him of his infallibility if you want him to act like a sensible man. Adrian could undertake no reforms, and still besought Erasmus to take arms for him.

Erasmus determined to gratify Adrian with least danger to himself and least injury to Luther.

'I remember Uzzah, and am afraid,' he said, in his quizzing way; 'it is not every one who is allowed to uphold the ark. Many a wise man has attacked Luther, and what has been effected? The Pope curses, the Emperor threatens; there are prisons, confiscations, faggots; and all is vain. What can a poor pigmy like me do?'

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'The world has been besotted with ceremo-

nies. Miserable monks have ruled all, entangling men's consciences for their own benefit. Dogma has been heaped on dogma. The bishops have been tyrants, the Pope's commissaries have been rascals. Luther has been an instrument of God's displeasure, like Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, or the Cæsars, and I shall not attack him on such grounds as these.'

Erasmus was too acute to defend against Luther the weak points of a bad cause. He would not declare for him—but we would not go over to his enemies. Yet, unless he quarrelled with Adrian, he could not be absolutely silent; so he chose a subject to write upon on which all schools of theology, Catholic or Protestant—all philosophers, all thinkers of whatever kind, have been divided from the beginning of time: fate and free will, predestination and the liberty of man—a problem which has no solution—which may be argued even from eternity to eternity.

The reason of the selection was obvious. Erasmus wished to please the Pope and not exasperate Luther. Of course he pleased neither, and offended both.

Luther, who did not comprehend his motive, was needlessly angry. Adrian and the monks were openly contemptuous. Sick of them and their quarrels, he grew weary of the world, and began to wish to be well out of it.

It is characteristic of Erasmus that, like many highly-gifted men, but unlike all theologians, he expressed a hope for sudden death, and declared it to be one of the greatest blessings which a human creature can receive.

Do not suppose that he broke down or showed the white feather to fortune's buffets. Through all storms he stuck bravely to his own proper work; editing classics, editing the Fathers, writing paraphrases—still doing for Europe what no other man could have done.

The Dominicans hunted him away from Louvaine. There was no living for him in

Germany for the Protestants. He suffered dreadfully from the stone, too, and in all ways had a cruel time of it. Yet he continued, for all that, to make life endurable.

He moved about in Switzerland and on the Upper Rhine. The lakes, the mountains, the waterfalls, the villas on the hill slopes, delighted Erasmus when few people else cared for such things. He was particular about his wine. The vintage of Burgundy was as new blood in his veins, and quickened his pen into brightness and life.

The German wines he liked worst—for this point among others, which is curious to observe in those days. The great capitalist wine-growers, anti-Reformers all of them, were people without conscience and humanity, and adulterated their liquors. Of course they did. They believed in nothing but money, and this was the way to make money.

‘The water they mix with the wine,’ Erasmus says, ‘is the least part of the mischief. They put in lime, and alum, and resin, and sulphur, and salt—and then they say it is good enough for heretics.’

Observe the practical issue of religious corruption. Show me a people where trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people where religion is a sham.

‘We hang men that steal money,’ Erasmus exclaimed, writing doubtless with the remembrance of a stomach-ache. ‘These wretches steal our money and our lives too, and get off scot free.’

He settled at last at Basle, which the storm had not yet reached, and tried to bury himself among his books. The shrieks of the conflict, however, still troubled his ears. He heard his own name still cursed, and he could not bear it or sit quiet under it.

His correspondence continued enormous. The high powers still appealed to him for advice and help: of open meddling he would

have no more ; he did not care, he said, to make a post of himself for every dog of a theologian to defile. Advice, however, he continued to give in the old style.

‘Put down the preachers on both sides. Fill the pulpits with men who will kick controversy into the kennel, and preach piety and good manners. Teach nothing in the schools but what bears upon life and duty. Punish those who break the peace, and punish no one else ; and wherever the new opinions have taken root, allow liberty of conscience.’

Perfection of wisdom ; but a wisdom which, unfortunately, was three centuries at least out of date, which even now we have not grown big enough to profit by. The Catholic princes and bishops were at work with fire and faggot. The Protestants were pulling down monasteries, and turning the monks and nuns out into the world. The Catholics declared that Erasmus was as much to blame as Luther. The Protestants held him responsible for the persecutions, and insisted, not without reason, that if Erasmus had been true to his conscience, the whole Catholic Church must have accepted the Reformation.

He suffered bitterly under these attacks upon him. He loved quiet—and his ears were deafened with clamor. He liked popularity—and he was the best abused person in Europe. Others who suffered in the same way he could advise to leave the black-coated jackdaws to their noise—but he could not follow his own counsel. When the curs were at his heels, he could not restrain himself from lashing out at them ; and, from his retreat at Basle, his sarcasms flashed out like jagged points of lightning.

Describing an emeute, and the burning of an age of a saint, ‘They insulted the poor image so,’ he said, ‘it is a marvel there was no miracle. The saint worked so many in the good old times.’



When Luther married an escaped nun, the Catholics exclaimed that Antichrist would be born from such an incestuous intercourse. 'Nay,' Erasmus said, 'if monk and nun produce Antichrist, there must have been legions of Antichrists these many years.'

More than once he was tempted to go over openly to Luther—not from a noble motive, but, as he confessed, 'to make those furies feel the difference between him and them.'

He was past sixty, with broken health and failing strength. He thought of going back to England, but England had by this time caught fire, and Basle had caught fire. There was no peace on earth.

'The horse has his heels,' he said, when advised to be quiet, 'the dog his teeth, the hedgehog his spines, the bee his sting. I myself have my tongue and my pen, and why should I not use them?'

Yet to use them to any purpose now he must take a side, and, sorely tempted as he was, he could not.

With the negative part of the Protestant creed he sympathized heartily; but he did not understand Luther's doctrine of faith, because he had none of his own, and he disliked it as a new dogma.

He regarded Luther's movement as an outburst of commonplace revolution, caused by the folly and wickedness of the authorities, but with no organizing vitality in itself; and his chief distress, as we gather from his later letters, was at his own treatment. He had done his best for both sides. He had failed, and was abused by everybody.

Thus passed away the last years of one of the most gifted men that Europe has ever seen. I have quoted many of his letters. I will add one more passage, written near the end of his life, very touching and pathetic:—

'Hercules,' he said, 'could not fight two monsters at once; while I, poor wretch, have



lions, cerberuses, cancers, scorpions every day at my sword's point; not to mention smaller vermin—rats, mosquitoes, bugs, and fleas. My troops of friends are turned to enemies. At dinner-tables or social gatherings in churches and kings' courts, in public carriage or public flyboat, scandal pursues me, and calumny defiles my name. Every goose now hisses at Erasmus; and it is worse than being stoned, once for all, like Stephen, or shot with arrows like Sebastian.

'They attack me now even for my Latin style, and spatter me with epigrams. Fame I would have parted with; but to be the sport of blackguards—to be pelted with potsherds and dirt and ordure—is not this worse than death?

"There is no rest for me in my age, unless I join Luther; and I cannot accept his doctrines. Sometimes I am stung with a desire to avenge my wrongs; but I say to myself, "Will you, to gratify your spleen, raise your hand against your mother the Church, who begot you at the font and fed you with the word of God?" I cannot do it. Yet I understand now how Arius, and Tertullian, and Wickliff were driven into schism. The theologians say I am their enemy. Why? Because I bade monks remember their vows; because I told parsons to leave their wranglings and read the Bible; because I told popes and cardinals to look at the Apostles, and make themselves more like to them. If this is to be their enemy, then indeed I have injured them.'

This was almost the last. The stone, advancing years, and incessant toil had worn him to a shred. The clouds grew blacker. News came from England that his dear friends More and Fisher had died upon the scaffold. He had long ceased to care for life; and death, almost as sudden as he had longed for, gave him peace at last.

So ended Desiderius Erasmus, the world's

idol for so many years ; and dying heaped with undeserved but too intelligible anathemas, seeing all that he had labored for swept away by the whirlwind.

Do not let me lead you to undervalue him. Without Erasmus, Luther would have been impossible ; and Erasmus really succeeded—so much of him as deserved to succeed—in Luther's victory.

He was brilliantly gifted. His industry never tired. His intellect was true to itself ; and no worldly motives ever tempted him into insincerity. He was ever far braver than he professed to be. Had he been brought to the trial, he would have borne it better than many a man who boasted louder of his courage.

And yet, for his special scheme for remodeling the mind of Europe, he failed hopelessly—almost absurdly. He believed, himself, that his work was spoilt by the Reformation ; but, in fact, under no conditions could any more have come of it.

Literature and cultivation will feed life when life exists already : and toleration and latitudinarianism are well enough when mind and conscience are awake and energetic of themselves.

When there is no spiritual life at all ; when men live only for themselves and for sensual pleasure ; when religion is superstition, and conscience a name, and God an idol half feared and half despised—then, for the restoration of the higher nature in man, qualities are needed different in kind from any which Erasmus possessed.

And now to go back to Luther. I cannot tell you all that Luther did ; it would be to tell you all the story of the German Reformation. I want you rather to consider the kind of man that Luther was, and to see in his character how he came to achieve what he did.

You remember that the Elector of Saxony, after the Diet of Worms, sent him to the Castle

of Wartburg, to prevent him from being murdered or kidnapped. He remained there many months ; and during that time the old ecclesiastical institutions of Germany were burning like a North American forest. The monasteries were broken up ; the estates were appropriated by the nobles ; the monks were sent wandering into the world. The bishops looked helplessly on while their ancient spiritual dominion was torn to pieces and trodden under foot. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and several more of the princes, declared for the Reformation. The Protestants had a majority in the Diet, and controlled the force of the empire. Charles the Fifth, busy with his French wars, and in want of money, dared not press questions to a crisis which he had not power to cope with ; and he was obliged for a time to recognize what he could not prevent. You would have thought Luther would have been well pleased to see the seed which he had sown bear fruit so rapidly ; yet it was exactly while all this was going on that he experienced those temptations of the devil of which he has left so wonderful an account.

We shall have our own opinions on the nature of these apparitions. But Luther, it is quite certain, believed that Satan himself attacked him in person. Satan, he tells us, came often to him, and said, ‘ See what you have done. Behold this ancient Church—this mother of saints—polluted and defiled by brutal violence. And it is you—you, a poor ignorant monk, that have set the people on to their unholy work. Are you so much wiser than the saints who approved the things which you have denounced ? Popes, bishops, clergy, kings, emperors—are none of these—are not all these together—wiser than Martin Luther the monk ? ’

The devil, he says, caused him great agony by these suggestions. He fell into deep fits

of doubt and humiliation and despondency. And wherever these thoughts came from we can only say that they were very natural thoughts—natural and right. He called them temptations; yet these were temptations which would not have occurred to any but a high-minded man.

He had, however, done only what duty had forced him to do. His business was to trust to God, who had begun the work and knew what He meant to make of it. His doubt and misgivings, therefore, he ascribed to Satan and his enormous imaginative vigor gave body to the voice which was speaking in him.

He tells many humorous stories—not always producible—of the means with which he encountered his offensive visitor.

‘The devil,’ he says, ‘is very proud, and what he least likes is to be laughed at.’ One night he was disturbed by something rattling in his room; the modern unbeliever will suppose it was a mouse. He got up, lit a candle, searched the apartment through, and could find nothing—the Evil One was indisputably there.

‘Oh!’ he said, ‘it is you, is it? He returned to bed, and went to sleep.

Think as you please about the cause of the noise, but remember that Luther had not the least doubt that he was alone in the room with the actual devil, who, if he could not overcome his soul, could at least twist his neck in a moment—and then think what courage there must have been in a man who could deliberately sleep in such a presence!

During his retirement he translated the Bible. The confusion at last became so desperate that he could no longer be spared: and believing that he was certain to be destroyed, he left Wartburg and returned to Wittenberg. Death was always before him as supremely imminent. He used to say that it would be a great disgrace to the Pope if he died in his bed,



He was wanted once at Leipsic. His friends said if he went there Duke George would kill him.

‘Duke George!’ he said; ‘I would go to Leipsic if it rained Duke Georges for nine days!’

No such cataclysm of Duke George happily took place. The single one there was would have gladly been mischievous if he could; but Luther outlived him—lived for twenty-four years after this, in continued toil, re-shaping the German Church, and giving form to its new doctrine.

Sacerdotalism, properly so called, was utterly abolished. The corruptions of the Church had all grown out of one root—the notion that the Christian priesthood possesses mystical power, conferred through episcopal ordination.

Religion, as Luther conceived it, did not consist in certain things done to and for a man by a so-called priest. It was the devotion of each individual soul to the service of God. Masses were nothing, and absolution was nothing; and a clergyman differed only from a layman in being set apart for the especial duties of teaching and preaching.

I am not concerned to defend Luther’s view in this matter. It is a matter of fact only, that in getting rid of episcopal ordination, he dried up the fountain from which the mechanical and idolatrous conceptions of religion had sprung; and, in consequence, the religious life of Germany has expanded with the progress of knowledge, while priesthoods everywhere cling to the formulas of the past, in which they live, and move, and have their being.

Enough of this.

The peculiar doctrine which has passed into Europe under Luther’s name is known as Justification by Faith. Bandied about as a watchword of party, it has by this time hardened



into a formula, and has become barren as the soil of a trodden foot-path. As originally proclaimed by Luther, it contained the deepest of moral truths. It expressed what was, and is, and must be, in one language or another, to the end of time, the conviction of every generous-minded man.

The service of God, as Luther learnt it from the monks, was a thing of desert and reward. So many good works done, so much to the right page in the great book; where the stock proved insufficient, there was the reserve fund of the merits of the saints, which the Church dispensed for money to those who needed.

‘Merit!’ Luther thought. ‘What merit can there be in such a poor caitiff as man? The better a man is—the more clearly he sees how little he is good for, the greater mockery it seems to attribute to him the notion of having deserved reward.’

‘Miserable creatures that we are!’ he said; ‘we earn our bread in sin. Till we are seven years old, we do nothing but eat and drink and sleep and play; from seven to twenty-one we study four hours a day, the rest of it we run about and amuse ourselves; then we work till fifty, and then we grow again to be children. We sleep half our lives; we give God a tenth of our time: and yet we think that with our good works we can merit heaven. What have I been doing to-day? I have talked for two hours; I have been at meals three hours; I have been idle four hours! Ah, enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!’

A perpetual struggle. Forever to be falling, yet to rise again and stumble forward with eyes turned to heaven—this was the best which would ever come of man. It was accepted in its imperfection by the infinite grace of God, who pities mortal weakness, and accepts the intention for the deed—who, when there is a sincere desire to serve Him, overlooks the shortcomings of infirmity.

Do you say such teaching leads to disregard of duty? All doctrines, when petrified into formulas, lead to that. But, as Luther said, 'where real faith is, a good life follows, as light follows the sun; faint and clouded, yet ever struggling to break through the mist which envelopes it, and welcoming the roughest discipline which tends to clear and raise it.

'The barley,' he says, in a homely but effective image—'the barley which we brew, the flax of which we weave our garments, must be bruised and torn ere they come to the use for which they are grown. So must Christians suffer. The natural creature must be combed and threshed. The old Adam must die, for the higher life to begin. If man is to rise to nobleness, he must first be slain.'

In modern language, the poet Goethe tells us the same truth. 'The natural man,' he says, 'is like the ore out of the iron mine. It is smelted in the furnace; it is forged into bars upon the anvil. A new nature is at last forced upon it, and it is made steel.'

It was this doctrine—it was this truth rather (the word doctrine reminds one of quack medicines)—which, quickening in Luther's mind, gave Europe its new life. It was the flame which, beginning with a small spark, kindled the heart-fires in every German household.

Luther's own life was a model of quiet simplicity. He remained poor. He might have had money if he had wished; but he chose rather, amidst his enormous labor, to work at a turning-lathe for his livelihood.

He was sociable, cheerful, fond of innocent amusements, and delighted to encourage them. His table-talk, collected by his friends, makes one of the most brilliant books in the world. He had no monkish theories about the necessity of abstinence; but he was temperate from habit and principle. A salt herring and a hunch of bread was his ordinary meal; and

he was once four days without food of any sort, having emptied his larder among the poor.

All kinds of people thrust themselves on Luther for help. Flights of nuns from the dissolved convents came to him to provide for them—naked, shivering creatures, with scarce a rag to cover them. Eight florins were wanted once to provide clothes for some of them. ‘Eight florins!’ he said; ‘and where am I to get eight florins?’ Great people had made him presents of plate: it all went to market to be turned into clothes and food for the wretched.

Melancthon says that, unless provoked, he was usually very gentle and tolerant. He recognized, and was almost alone in recognizing, the necessity of granting liberty of conscience. No one hated Popery more than he did, yet he said:—

‘The Papists must bear with us, and we with them. If they will not follow us, we have no right to force them. Wherever they can, they will hang, burn, behead, and strangle us. I shall be persecuted as long as I live, and most likely killed. But it must come to this at last—every man must be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and answer for his belief to his Maker.’

Erasmus said of Luther that there were two natures in him: sometimes he wrote like an apostle—sometimes like a raving ribald.

Doubtless, Luther could be impolite on occasions. When he was angry, invectives rushed from him like boulder rocks down a mountain torrent in flood. We need not admire all that; in quiet times it is hard to understand it.

Here, for instance, is a specimen. Our Henry the Eighth, who began life as a highly orthodox sovereign, broke a lance with Luther for the Papacy.

Luther did not credit Henry with a composition which was probably his own after all. He thought the king was put forward by some

of the English bishops—‘Thomists’ he calls them, as men who looked for the beginning and end of wisdom to the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

‘Courage,’ he exclaimed to them, ‘swine that you are! burn me then, if you can and dare. Here I am; do your worst upon me. Scatter my ashes to all the winds—spread them through all seas. My spirit shall pursue you still. Living, I am the foe of the Papacy; and dead, I will be its foe twice over. Hogs of Thomists! Luther shall be the bear in your way—the lion in your path. Go where you will Luther shall cross you. Luther shall leave you neither peace nor rest till he has crushed in your brows of brass and dashed out your iron brains.’

Strong expressions; but the times were not gentle. The prelates whom he supposed himself to be addressing were the men who filled our Smithfield with the reek of burning human flesh.

Men of Luther’s stature are like the violent forces of Nature herself—terrible when roused, and, in repose, majestic and beautiful. Of vanity he had not a trace. ‘Do not call yourselves Lutherans,’ he said; ‘call yourselves Christians. Who and what is Luther? Has Luther been crucified for the world?’ A

I mentioned his love of music. His songs and hymns were the expression of the very inmost heart of the German people. ‘Music’ he called ‘the grandest and sweetest gifts of God to man.’ ‘Satan hates music,’ he said; ‘he knows how it drives the evil spirit out of us.’

He was extremely interested in all natural things. Before the science of botany was dreamt of, Luther had divined the principle of vegetable life. ‘The principle of marriage runs through all creation,’ he said; ‘and flowers as well as animals are male and female.’

A garden called out bursts of eloquence from



him; beautiful sometimes as a finished piece of poetry.

One April day as he was watching the swelling buds, he exclaimed:—

‘Praise be to God the Creator, who out of a dead world makes all alive again. See those shoots how they burgeon and swell. Image of the resurrection of the dead! Winter is death—summer is the resurrection. Between them lie spring and autumn, as the period of uncertainty and change. The proverb says—

Trust not a day  
Ere birth of May.

Let us pray our Father in heaven to give us this day our daily bread.’

‘We are in the dawn of a new era,’ he said another time; ‘we are beginning to think something of the natural world which was ruined in Adam’s fall. We are learning to see all round us the greatness and glory of the Creator. We can see the Almighty hand—the infinite goodness—in the humblest flower. We praise Him—we thank Him—we glorify Him—we recognize in creation the power of His word. He spoke and it was there. The stone of the peach is hard; but the soft kernel swells and bursts it when the time comes. An egg—what a thing is that! If an egg had never been seen in Europe, and a traveller had brought one from Calcutta, how would all the world have wondered!’

And again:—

‘If a man could make a single rose, we should give him an empire; yet roses, and flowers no less beautiful, are scattered in profusion over the world, and no one regards them.’

There are infinite other things which I should like to tell you about Luther, but time wears on. I must confine what more I have to say to a single matter—for which more than



any other he has been blamed—I mean his marriage.

He himself, a monk and a priest, had taken a vow of celibacy. The person whom he married had been a nun, and as such had taken a vow of celibacy also.

The marriage was unquestionably no affair of passion. Luther had come to middle age when it was brought about, when temptations of that kind lose their power; and among the many accusations which have been brought against his early life, no one has ventured to charge him with incontinence. His taking a wife was a grave act deliberately performed; and it was either meant as a public insult to established ecclesiastical usage, or else he considered that the circumstances of the time required it of him.

Let us see what those circumstances were. The enforcement of celibacy on the clergy was, in Luther's opinion, both iniquitous in itself, and productive of enormous immorality. The impurity of the religious orders had been the jest of satirists for a hundred years. It had been the distress and perplexity of pious and serious persons. Luther himself was impressed with profound pity for the poor men, who were cut off from the natural companionship which nature had provided for them—who were thus exposed to temptations which they ought not to have been called upon to resist.

The dissolution of the religious houses had enormously complicated the problem. Germany was covered with friendless and homeless men and women adrift upon the world. They came to Luther to tell them what to do; and advice was of little service without example.

The world had grown accustomed to immorality in such persons. They might have lived together in concubinage, and no one would have thought much about it. Their marriage was regarded with a superstitious terror as a kind of incest.

Luther, on the other hand, regarded marriage as the natural and healthy state in which clergy as well as laity were intended to live. Immorality was hateful to him as a degradation of a sacrament—impious, loathsome, and dishonored. Marriage was the condition in which humanity was at once purest, best, and happiest.

For himself, he had become inured to a single life. He had borne the injustice of his lot, when the burden had been really heavy.

But time and custom had lightened the load ; and had there been nothing at issue but his own personal happiness, he would not have given further occasion to the malice of his enemies.

But tens of thousands of poor creatures were looking to him to guide them—guide them by precept, or guide them by example. He had satisfied himself that the vow of celibacy had been unlawfully imposed both on him and them—that, as he would put it, it had been a snare devised by the devil. He saw that all eyes were fixed on him, that it was no use to tell others that they might marry, unless he himself led the way, and married first. And it was characteristic of him that, having resolved to do the thing, he did it in the way most likely to show the world his full thought upon the matter.

That this was his motive, there is no kind of doubt whatever.

‘We may be able to live unmarried,’ he said ; ‘but in these days we must protest in deed as well as word, against the doctrine of celibacy. It is an invention of Satan. Before I took my wife, I had made up my mind that I must marry some one ; and had I been overtaken by illness, I should have betrothed myself to some pious maiden.’

He asked nobody’s advice. Had he let his intention be suspected, the moderate respectable people—the people who thought like

Erasmus—those who wished well to what was good, but wished also to stand well with the world's opinion—such persons as these would have overwhelmed him with remonstrances.

‘When you marry,’ he said to a friend in a similar situation, ‘be quiet about it, or mountains will rise between you and your wishes. If I had not been swift and secret I should have had the whole world in my way.’

Catherine Bora, the lady whom he chose for his wife, was a nun of good family, left homeless and shelterless by the breaking-up of her convent. She was an ordinary, unimaginative body—plain in person and plain in mind, in no sense whatever a heroine of romance—but a decent, sensible, commonplace Haus Frau.

The age of romance was over with both of them; yet for all that, never marriage brought a plainer blessing with it. They began with respect and ended with steady affection.

The happiest life on earth Luther used to say, is with a pious good wife: in peace and quiet, contented with a little, and giving God thanks.

He spoke from his own experience. His Katie, as he called her, was not clever, and he had numerous stories to tell of the beginning of their adventures together.

‘The first year of married life is an odd business he says. ‘At meals, where you used to be alone, you are yourself and somebody else. When you wake in the morning, there are a pair of tails close to you on the pillow. My Katie used to sit with me when I was at work. She thought she ought not to be silent. She did not know what to say, so she would ask me.

“Herr Doctor, is not the master of the ceremonies in Prussia the brother of the Margrave?”’

She was an old woman.

‘Doctor,’ she said to him one day, ‘how is it

that under Popery we prayed so often and so earnestly, and now our prayers are cold and seldom ?’

Katie might have spoken for herself. Luther, to the last, spent hours of every day in prayer. He advised her to read the Bible a little more. She said she had read enough of it, and knew half of it by heart. ‘Ah!’ he said, “here begins weariness of the word of God. One day new light will rise up, and the Scriptures will be despised and be flung away into the corner.’

His relations with his children were singularly beautiful. The recollection of his own boyhood made him especially gentle with them, and their fancies and imaginations delighted him.

Children, to him, were images of unfallen nature. ‘Children,’ he said, ‘imagine heaven a place where rivers run with cream, and trees are hung with cakes and plums. Do not blame them. They are but showing their simple, natural, unquestioning, all-believing faith.’

One day, after dinner, when the fruit was on the table, the children were watching it with longing eyes. ‘That is the way,’ he said, ‘in which we grown Christians ought to look for the Judgment Day.’

His daughter Magdalen died when she was fourteen. He speaks of his loss with the unaffected simplicity of natural grief, yet with the faith of a man who had not the slightest doubt into whose hands his treasure was passing. Perfect nature and perfect piety. Neither one emotion nor the other disguised or suppressed.

You will have gathered something, I hope, from these faint sketches, of what Luther was; you will be able to see how far he deserves to be called by our modern new lights, a Philistine or a heretic. We will now return to the subject with which we began, and resume, in a general conclusion, the argument of these Lectures.



In part, but not wholly, it can be done in Luther's words.

One regrets that Luther did not know Erasmus better, or knowing him, should not have treated him with more forbearance.

Erasmus spoke of him for the most part with kindness. He interceded for him, defended him, and only with the utmost reluctance was driven into controversy with him.

Luther, on the other hand, saw in Erasmus a man who was false to his convictions; who played with truth; who, in his cold, sarcastic scepticism, believed in nothing—scarcely even in God. He was unaware of his own obligations to him, for Erasmus was not a person who would trumpet out his own good deeds.

Thus Luther says:—

‘All you who honor Christ, I pray you hate Erasmus. He is a scoffer and a mocker. He speaks in riddles; and jests at Popery and Gospel, and Christ and God, with his uncertain speeches. He might have served the Gospel if he would, but, like Judas, he has betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss. He is not with us, and he is not with our foes; and I say with Joshua, Choose whom ye will serve. He thinks we should trim to the times, and hang our cloaks to the wind. He is himself his own first object; and as he lived, he died.

‘I take Erasmus to be the worst enemy that Christ has had for a thousand years. Intellect does not understand religion, and when it comes to the things of God, it laughs at them. He scoffs like Lucian, and by-and-by he will say, Behold, how are these among the saints whose life we counted for folly.

‘I bid you, therefore, take heed of Erasmus. He treats theology as a fool's jest, and the Gospel as a fable good for the ignorant to believe.’

Of Erasmus personally, much of this was unjust and untrue. Erasmus knew many things which it would have been well for



Luther to have known ; and, as a man, he was better than his principles.

But if for the name of Erasmus we substitute the theory of human things which Erasmus represented, between that creed and Luther there is, and must be, an eternal antagonism.

If to be true in heart and just in act are the first qualities necessary for the elevation of humanity—if without these all else is worthless, intellectual culture cannot give what intellectual culture does not require or imply. You cultivate the plant which has already life ; you will waste your labor in cultivating a stone. The moral life is the counterpart of the natural, alike mysterious in its origin, and alike visible only in its effects.

Intellectual gifts are like gifts of strength, or wealth, or rank, or worldly power—splendid instruments if nobly used—but requiring qualities to use them nobler and better than themselves.

The rich man may spend his wealth on vulgar luxury. The clever man may live for intellectual enjoyment—refined enjoyment it may be—but enjoyment still, and still centering in self.

If the spirit of Erasmus had prevailed, it would have been with modern Europe as with the Roman Empire in its decay. The educated would have been mere sceptics ; the multitude would have been sunk in superstition. In both alike all would have perished which deserves the name of manliness.

And this leads me to the last observation that I have to make to you. In the sciences, the philosopher leads ; the rest of us take on trust what he tells us. The spiritual progress of mankind has followed the opposite course. Each forward step has been made first among the people, and the last converts have been among the learned.

The explanation is not far to look for. In the sciences there is no temptation of self-interest to mislead. In matters which affect

life and conduct, the interests and prejudices of the cultivated classes are enlisted on the side of the existing order of things, and their better trained faculties and larger acquirements serve only to find them argument for believing what they wish to believe.

Simpler men have less to lose ; they come more in contact with the realities of life, and they learn wisdom in the experience of suffering.

Thus it was that when the learned and the wise turned away from Christianity, the fishermen of the Galilean lake listened, and a new life began for mankind. A miner's son converted Germany to the Reformation. The London artisans and the peasants of Buckinghamshire went to the stake for doctrines which were accepted afterwards as a second revelation.

So it has been ; so it will be to the end, When a great teacher comes again upon the earth, he will find his first disciples where Christ found them and Luther found them. Had Luther written for the learned, the words which changed the face of Europe would have slumbered in impotence on the bookshelves.

In appealing to the German nation, you will agree, I think, with me, that he did well and not ill ; you will not sacrifice his great name to the disdain of a shallow philosophy, or to the grimacing of a dead superstition, whose ghost is struggling out of its grave.

## SPINOZA.\*

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*Benedicti de Spinoza Tractatus de Deo et Homine ejusque Felicitate Lineamenta, atque Annotationes ad Tractatum Theologico-Politicum*, edidit et illustravit EDWARDUS BOEHMER. Halæ ad Salam. J. F. Lippert. 1852.

This little volume is one evidence among many of the interest which continues to be felt by the German students in Spinoza. The actual merit of the book itself is little or nothing ; but it shows the industry with which they are gleaning among the libraries of Holland for any traces of him which they can recover ; and the smallest fragments of his writings are acquiring that factitious importance which attaches to the most insignificant relics of acknowledged greatness. Such industry cannot be otherwise than laudable, but we do not think it at present altogether wisely directed. Nothing is likely to be brought to light which will further illustrate Spinoza's philosophy. He himself spent the better part of his life in clearing his language of ambiguities ; and such earlier sketches of his system as are supposed still to be extant in MS., and a specimen of which M. Boehmer believes himself to have discovered, contribute only obscurity to what is in no need of additional difficulty. Of Spinoza's private history, on the contrary, rich as it must have been, and abundant traces of it as must be extant somewhere in his own and his friends' correspondence, we know only enough to feel how vast a

\* *Westminster Review*, 1854.

chasm remains to be filled. It is not often that any man in this world lives a life so well worth writing as Spinoza lived; not for striking incidents or large events connected with it, but because (and no sympathy with his peculiar opinions disposes us to exaggerate his merit) he was one of the very best men whom these modern times have seen, Excommunicated, disinherited, and thrown upon the world when a mere boy to seek his livelihood, he resisted the inducements which on all sides were urged upon him to come forward in the world. He refused pensions, legacies, money in many forms; he maintained himself with grinding glasses for optical instruments, an art which he had been taught in early life, and in which he excelled the best workmen in Holland; and when he died, which was at the early age of forty-four, the affection with which he was regarded showed itself singularly in the endorsement of a tradesman's bill which was sent in to his executors, in which he was described as M. Spinoza of 'blessed memory.'

The account which remains of him we owe, not to an admiring disciple, but to a clergyman to whom his theories were detestable; and his biographer allows that the most malignant scrutiny had failed to detect a blemish in his character—that, except so far as his opinions were blamable, he had lived to outward appearance free from fault. We desire, in what we are going to say of him, to avoid offensive collision with popular prejudices; still less shall we place ourselves in antagonism with the earnest convictions of serious persons: our business is to relate what Spinoza was, and leave others to form their own conclusions. But one lesson there does seem to lie in such a life of such a man,—a lesson which he taught equally by example and in word,—that wherever there is genuine and thorough love for good and goodness, no speculative superstructure of opinion can be so extravagant as to for-



feit those graces which are promised, not to clearness of intellect, but to purity of heart. In Spinoza's own beautiful language,—‘*Justitia et caritas unicum et certissimum veræ fidei Catholicæ signum est, et veri Spiritûs Sancti fructus: et ubicumque hæc reperiuntur, ibi Christus re verâ est, et ubicumque hæc desunt deest Christus: solo namque Christi Spiritu duci possumus in amorem justitiæ et caritatis.*’ We may deny his conclusions; we may consider his system of thought preposterous and even pernicious; but we cannot refuse him the respect which is the right of all sincere and honorable men. Wherever and on whatever questions good men are found ranged on opposite sides, one of three alternatives is always true: either the points of disagreement are purely speculative and of no moral importance—or there is a misunderstanding of language, and the same thing is meant under a difference of words—or else the real truth is something different from what is held by any of the disputants, and each is representing some important element which the others ignore or forget. In either case, a certain calmness and good temper is necessary, if we would understand what we disagree with, or would oppose it with success; Spinoza's influence over European thought is too great to be denied or set aside; and if his doctrines be false in part, or false altogether, we cannot do their work more surely than by calumny or misrepresentation—a most obvious truism, which no one now living will deny in words, and which a century or two hence perhaps will begin to produce same effect upon the popular judgment.

Bearing it in mind, then, ourselves, as far as we are able, we propose to examine the Pantheistic philosophy in the first and only logical form which as yet it has assumed. Whatever may have been the case with Spinoza's disciples, in the author of this system there was no unwillingness; to look closely at it, or to follow

it out its conclusions and whatever other merits or demerits belong to him, at least he has done as much as with language can be done to make himself thoroughly understood.

And yet, both in friend and enemy alike, there has been a reluctance to see Spinoza as he really was. The Herder and Schleiermacher school have claimed him as a Christian—position which no little disguise was necessary to make tenable; the orthodox Protestants and Catholics have called him an Atheist—which is still more extravagant; and even a man like Novalis, who, it might have been expected, would have had something reasonable to say, could find no better name for him than a *Gott trunkner Mann*—a God intoxicated man: an expression which has been quoted by everybody who has since written upon the subject, and which is about as inapplicable as those laboriously pregnant sayings usually are. With due allowance for exaggeration, such a name would describe tolerably the Transcendental mystics, a Toler, a Boehmen, or a Swedenborg; but with what justice can it be applied to the cautious, methodical Spinoza, who carried his thoughts about with him for twenty years, deliberately shaping them, and who gave them at last to the world in a form more severe than with such subjects had ever been so much as attempted before? With him, as with all great men, there was no effort after sublime emotions. He was a plain, practical person; his object in philosophy was only to find a rule by which to govern his own actions and his own judgment; and his treatises contain no more than the conclusions at which he arrived in this purely personal search, with the grounds on which he rested them.

We cannot do better than follow his own account of himself as he has given it in the opening of his unfinished Tract, ‘*De Emendatione Intellectus*.’ His language is very beautiful, but it is elaborate and full; and, as we have a

long journey before us, we must be content to epitomize it.

Looking round him on his entrance into life, and asking himself what was his place and business there, he turned for examples to his fellow-men, and found little that he could venture to imitate. He observed them all in their several ways governing themselves by their different notions of what they thought desirable ; while these notions themselves were resting on no more secure foundation than a vague, inconsistent experience : the experience of one was not the experience of another, and thus men were all, so to say, rather playing experiments with life than living, and the larger portion of them miserably failing. Their mistakes arose, as it seemed to Spinoza, from inadequate knowledge ; things which at one time looked desirable disappointed expectation when obtained, and the wiser course concealed itself often under an uninviting exterior. He desired to substitute certainty for conjecture, and to endeavor to find, by some surer method, where the real good of man actually lay. We must remember that he had been brought up a Jew, and had been driven out of the Jews' communion ; his mind was therefore in contact with the bare facts of life, with no creed or system lying between them and himself as the interpreter of experience. He was thrown on his own resources to find his way for himself, and the question was, how to find it. Of all forms of human thought, one only, he reflected, would admit of the certainty which he required. If certain knowledge were attainable at all, it must be looked for under the mathematical or demonstrative method ; by tracing from ideas clearly conceived the consequences which were formally involved in them. What, then, were these ideas—these *veræ ideæ*, as he calls them—and how were they to be obtained ? If they were to serve as

the axioms of his system, they must be self-evident truths, of which no proof was required; and the illustration which he gives of the character of such ideas is ingenious and Platonic.

In order to produce any mechanical instrument, Spinoza says, we require others with which to manufacture it; and others again to manufacture those; and it would seem thus as if the process must be an infinite one, and as if nothing could ever be made at all. Nature, however, has provided for the difficulty in creating of her own accord certain rude instruments with the help of which we can make others better; and others again with the help of those. And so he thinks it must be with the mind; there must be somewhere similar original instruments provided also as the first outfit of intellectual enterprise. To discover these, he examines the various senses in which men are said to know anything, and he finds that they resolve themselves into three, or, as he elsewhere divides it, four.

We know a thing—

i. *Ex mero auditu*: because we have heard it from some person or persons whose veracity we have no reason to question.

ii. *Ab experiētiâ vagâ*: from general experience: for instance, all facts or phenomena which come to us through our senses as phenomena, but of the causes of which we are ignorant.

2. We know a thing as we have correctly convinced the laws of its phenomena, and see them following in their sequence in the order of nature.

3. Finally, we know a thing, *ex scientiâ intuitivâ*, which alone is absolutely clear and certain.

To illustrate these divisions, suppose it be required to find a fourth proportional which shall stand to the third of three numbers as



the second does to the first. The merchant's clerk knows his rule ; he multiplies the second into the third and divides by the first. He neither knows nor cares to know why the result is the number which he seeks, but he has learnt the fact that it is so, and he remembers it.

A person a little wiser has tried the experiment in a variety of simple cases ; he has discovered the rule by induction, but still does not understand it.

A third has mastered the laws of proportion mathematically, as he has found them in Euclid or other geometrical treatise.

A fourth, with the plain numbers of 1, 2, and 3, sees for himself by simple intuitive force that  $1 : 2 = 3 : 6$ .

Of these several kinds of knowledge, the third and fourth alone deserve to be called knowledge, the others being no more than opinions more or less justly founded. The last is the only real insight, although the third, being exact in its form, may be depended upon as a basis of certainty. Under this last, as Spinoza allows, nothing except the very simplest truths, *non nisi simplicissimæ veritates*, can be perceived ; but, such as they are, they are the foundation of all after-science ; and the true ideas, the *veræ ideæ*, which are apprehended by this faculty of intuition, are the primitive instruments with which nature has furnished us. If we ask for a test by which to distinguish them, he has none to give us. 'Veritas,' he says to his friends, in answer to their question, 'veritas index sui est et falsi. Veritas se ipsam patefacit.' All original truths are of such a kind that they cannot without absurdity even be conceived to be false ; the opposites of them are contradictions in terms.—'Ut sciam me scire, necessario debeo prius scire. Hinc patet quod certitudo nihil est præter ipsam essentiam objectivam. . . . Cum itaque veritas nullo egeat signo, sed

sufficiat habere essentiam rerum objectivam, aut, quod idem est, ideas, ut omne tollatur dubium ; hinc sequitur quod vera non est methodus, signum veritatis quærere post acquisitionem idearum ; sed quod vera methodus est via, ut ipsa veritas, aut essentiæ objectivæ rerum, aut ideæ (omnia illa idem significant) debito ordine quærantur.' (*De Emend. Intell.*)

Spinoza will scarcely carry with him the reasoner of the nineteenth century in arguments like these. When we remember the thousand conflicting opinions, the truth of which their several advocates have as little doubted as they have doubted their own existence, we require some better evidence than a mere feeling of certainty ; and Aristotle's less pretending canon promises a safer road. "Ο πᾶσι δοκεῖ, 'what all men think,' says Aristotle, τοῦτο εἶναι φάμεν, 'this we say is,'—'and if you will not have this to be a fair ground of conviction, you will scarcely find one which will serve you better. We are to see, however what these *ideæ* are which are offered to us as self-evident. Of course, if they are self-evident, if they do produce conviction, nothing more is to be said ; but it does, indeed, appear strange to us that Spinoza was not staggered as to the validity of his canon, when his friends, every one of them, so floundered and stumbled among what he regarded as his simplest propositions ; when he found them, in spite of all that he could say, requiring endless *signa veritatis*, and unable for a long time even to understand their meaning, far less to 'recognize them as elementary certainties.' Modern readers may, perhaps, be more fortunate. We produce at length the definitions and axioms of the first book of the 'Ethica,' and they may judge for themselves :—

#### DEFINITIONS.

1. By a thing which is *causa sui*, its own cause, I mean a thing the essence of which involves the existence of it,

or a thing which cannot be conceived except as existing.

2. I call a thing finite, *suo genere*, when it can be limited by another (or others) of the same nature—*e. g.* a given body is called finite, because we can always conceive another body enveloping it; but body is not limited by thought, nor thought by body.

3. By substance I mean what exists in itself and is conceived by itself; the conception of which, that is, does not involve the conception of anything else as the cause it.

4. By attribute I mean whatever the intellect perceives of substance as constituting the essence of substance.

5. Mode is an affection of substance, or is that which is in something else, by and through which it is conceived.

6. God is a being absolutely infinite; a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses His eternal and infinite essence.

#### EXPLANATION.

I say *absolutely* infinite, not infinite *suo genere*—for of what is infinite *suo genere* only, the attributes are not infinite but finite; whereas what is infinite absolutely contains in its own essence everything by which substance can be expressed, and which involves no impossibility.

7. That thing is 'free' which exists by the sole necessity of its own nature, and is determined in its operation by itself only. That is 'not free' which is called into existence by something else, and is determined in its operation according to a fixed and definite method.

8. Eternity is existence itself, conceived as following necessarily and solely from the definition of the thing which is eternal.

#### EXPLANATION.

Because existence of this kind is conceived as an eternal verity, and, therefore, cannot be explained by duration, even though the duration be without beginning or end.

So far the definitions; then follow the

#### AXIOMS.

1. All things that exist, exist either themselves or in virtue of something else.

2. What we cannot conceive of as existing in virtue of something else, we must conceive through and in itself.

3. From a given cause an effect necessarily follows, and if there be no given cause no effect can follow.

4. Things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be understood through one another—*i. e.* the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.

5. To understand an effect implies that we understand the cause of it.

6. A true idea is one which corresponds with its *ideate*.

7. The essence of anything which can be conceived as non-existent does not involve existence.

Such is our metaphysical outfit of simple ideas with which to start upon our enterprise of learning. The larger number of them, so far from being simple, must be absolutely without meaning to persons whose minds are undisciplined in metaphysical abstraction; they become only intelligible propositions as we look back upon them with the light of the system which they are supposed to contain.

Although, however, we may justly quarrel with such unlooked-for difficulties, the important question, after all, is not of the obscurity of these axioms, but of their truth. Many things in all the sciences are obscure to an unpractised understanding, which are true enough and clear enough to people acquainted with the subjects, and they may be fairly made the foundations of a scientific system, although rudimentary students must be contented to accept them upon faith. Of course, also, it is entirely competent to Spinoza, or to any one, to define the terms which he intends to use just as he pleases, provided it be understood that any conclusions which he derives out of them apply only to the ideas so defined, and not to any supposed object existing which corresponds with them. Euclid defines his triangles and circles, and discovers that to figures so described, certain properties previously unknown may be proved to belong. But as in nature there are no such things as triangles and circles exactly answering the definition, his



conclusions, as applied to actually existing objects, are either not true at all or only proximately so. Whether it be possible to bridge over the gulf between existing things and the abstract conception of them, as Spinoza attempts to do, we shall presently see. It is a royal road to certainty if it be a practicable one; but we cannot say that we ever met any one who could say honestly Spinoza's reasonings had convinced him; and power of demonstration, like all other powers, can be judged only by its effects. Does it prove? does it produce conviction? If not, it is nothing.

We need not detain our readers among these abstractions. The power of Spinozism does not lie so remote from ordinary appreciation or we should long ago have heard the last of it. Like all other systems which have attracted followers, it addresses itself, not to the logical intellect, but to the imagination, which it affects to set aside. We refuse to submit to the demonstrations by which it thrusts itself upon our reception; but regarding it as a whole, as an attempt to explain the nature of the world of which we are a part, we can still ask ourselves how far the attempt is successful. Some account of these things we know that there must be, and the curiosity which asks the question regards itself, of course, as competent in some degree to judge of the answer to it.

Before proceeding, however, to regard this philosophy in the aspect in which it is really powerful, we must clear our way through the fallacy of the method.

The system is evolved in a series of theorems in severely demonstrative order out of the definitions and axioms which we have translated. To propositions 1—6 we have nothing to object; they will not, probably, convey any very clear ideas, but they are so far purely abstract, and seem to follow as far as we can speak of 'following' in such

subjects) by fair reasoning. 'Substance is prior in nature to its affections.' 'Substances with different attributes have nothing in common,' and, therefore, 'one cannot be the cause of the other.' 'Things really distinct are distinguished by difference either of attribute or mode (there being nothing else by which they can be distinguished), and, therefore, because things modally distinguished do not *quæ* substance differ from one another, there cannot be more than one substance of the same attribute. Therefore (let us remind our readers that we are among what Spinoza calls *notiones simplicissimas*), since there cannot be two substances of the same attribute, and substances of different attributes cannot be the cause one of the other, it follows that no substance can be produced by another substance.'

The existence of substance, he then concludes, is involved in the nature of the thing itself. Substance exists. It does and must. We ask, why? and we are answered, because there is nothing capable of producing it, and therefore it is self-caused—*i. e.* by the first definition the essence of it implies existence as part of the idea. It is astonishing that Spinoza should not have seen that he assumes the fact that substance does exist in order to prove that it must. If it cannot be produced *and* exists, then, of course, it exists in virtue of its own nature. But supposing it does not exist, supposing it is all a delusion, the proof falls to pieces. We have to fall back on the facts of experience, on the obscure and unscientific certainty that the thing which we call the world, and the personalities which we call ourselves, are a real substantial something, before we find ground of any kind to stand upon. Conscious of the infirmity of his demonstration, Spinoza winds round it and round it, adding proof to proof, but never escaping the same vicious circle: substance exists because it

exists, and the ultimate experience of existence, so far from being of that clear kind which can be accepted as an axiom, is the most confused of all our sensations. What is existence? and what is that something which we say exists? Things—essences—existences! these are but the vague names with which faculties, constructed only to deal with conditional phenomena, disguise their incapacity. The world in the Hindoo legend was supported upon the back of the tortoise. It was a step between the world and nothingness, and served to cheat the imagination with ideas of a fictitious resting-place.

If any one affirms (says Spinoza) that he has a clear, distinct—that is to say, a true—idea of substance, but that nevertheless he is uncertain whether any such substance exist, it is the same as if he were to affirm that he had a true idea, but yet was uncertain whether it was not false. Or if he says that substance can be created, it is like saying that a false idea can become a true idea—as absurd a thing as it is possible to conceive; and therefore the existence of substance, as well as the essence of it, must be acknowledged as an eternal verity.

It is again the same story. Spinoza speaks of a clear idea of substance; but he has not proved that such an idea is within the compass of the mind. A man's own notion that he sees clearly, is no proof that he really sees clearly; and the distinctness of a definition in itself is no evidence that it corresponds adequately with the object of it. No doubt a man who professes to have an idea of substance as an existing thing, cannot doubt, as long as he has it, that substance so exists. This is merely to say that as long as a man is certain of this or that fact, he has no doubt of it. But neither his certainty nor Spinoza's will be of any use to a man who has no such idea, and who cannot recognize the lawfulness of the method by which it is arrived at.

From the self-existing substance it is a short

step to the existence of God. After a few more propositions, following one another with the same kind of coherence, we arrive successively at the conclusion that there is but one substance ; that this substance being necessarily existent, it is also infinite ; that it is therefore identical with the Being who had been previously defined as the ' Ens absolute perfectum.'

Demonstrations of this kind were the characteristics of the period. Descartes had set the example of constructing them, and was followed by Cudworth, Clarke, Berkeley, and many others besides Spinoza. The inconclusiveness of the method may perhaps be observed most readily in the strangely opposite conceptions formed by all these writers of the nature of that Being whose existence they nevertheless agreed, by the same process, to gather each out of their ideas. It is important, however, to examine it carefully, for it is the very keystone of the Pantheistic system.

As stated by Descartes, the argument stands something as follows :—God is an all-perfect Being,—perfection is the idea which we form of him : existence is a mode of perfection, and therefore God exists. The sophism we are told is only apparent. Existence is part of the idea—as much involved in it as the equality of all lines drawn from the centre to the circumference of a circle is involved in the idea of a circle. A non-existent all-perfect Being is as inconceivable as a quadrilateral triangle.

It is sometimes answered that in this way we may prove the existence of anything—Titans, Chimæras, or Olympian Gods ; we have but to define them as existing, and the proof is complete. But, this objection summarily set aside ; none of those beings are by hypothesis absolutely perfect, and, therefore, of their existence we can conclude nothing. With greater justice, however, we may say, that of such terms as perfection and existence we know too little to



speculate. Existence may be an imperfection for all we can tell ; we know nothing about the matter. Such arguments are but endless *petitiones principii*—like the self-devouring serpent, resolving themselves into nothing. We wander round and round them, in the hope of finding some tangible point at which we can seize their meaning ; but we are presented everywhere with the same impracticable surface, from which our grasp glides off ineffectual.

Spinoza himself, however, obviously felt an intense conviction of the validity of his argument. His opinion is stated with sufficient distinctness in one of his letters. ‘ Nothing is more clear,’ he writes to his pupil De Vries, ‘ than that, on the one hand, everything which exists is conceived by or under some attribute or other ; that the more reality, therefore, a being or thing has, the more attributes must be assigned to it ; ’ ‘ and conversely ’ (and this he calls his *argumentum palmarium* in proof of the existence of God), ‘ *the more attributes I assign to a thing, the more I am forced to conceive it as existing.*’ Arrange the argument how we please, we shall never get it into a form clearer than this :—The more perfect a thing is, the more it must exist (as if existence could admit of more or less) ; and therefore the all-perfect Being must exist absolutely. There is no flaw, we are told, in the reasoning ; and if we are not convinced, it is from the confused habits of our own minds.

Some persons may think that all arguments are good when on the right side, and that it is a gratuitous impertinence to quarrel with the proofs of a conclusion which it is so desirable that all should receive. As yet, however, we are but inadequately acquainted with the idea attached by Spinoza to the word perfection ; and if we commit ourselves to his logic, it may lead us out to unexpected consequences. All such reasonings presume, as a first condition,

that we men possess faculties capable of dealing with absolute ideas ; that we can understand the nature of things external to ourselves as they really *are* in their absolute relation to one another, independent of our own conception. The question immediately before us is one which can never be determined. The truth which is to be proved is one which we already believe ; and if, as we believe also, our conviction of God's existence is like that of our own existence, intuitive and immediate, the grounds of it can never adequately be analyzed ; we cannot say exactly what they are, and therefore we cannot say what they are not. Whatever we receive intuitively, we receive without proof ; and stated as a naked proposition, it must involve a *petitio principii*. We have a right, however, to object at once to an argument in which the conclusion is more obvious than the premises ; and if it lead on to other consequences which we disapprove in themselves, we reject it without difficulty or hesitation. We ourselves believe that God is, because we experience the control of a 'power' which is stronger than we ; and our instincts teach us so much of the nature of that power as our own relation to it requires us to know. God is the being to whom our obedience is due ; and the perfections which we attribute to Him are those moral perfections which are the proper object of our reverence. Strange to say, the perfections of Spinoza, which appear so clear to him, are without any moral character whatever : and for men to speak of the justice of God, he tells us, is but to see in Him a reflection of themselves ; as if a triangle were to conceive of Him as *eminenter triangularis*, or a circle to give Him the property of circularity."

Having arrived at existence, we next find ourselves among ideas, which at least are intelligible, if the character of them is as far removed as before from the circle of ordinary

thought. Nothing exists except substance, the attributes under which substance is expressed, and the modes or affections of those attributes. There is but one substance self-existent, eternal, necessary, and that is the absolutely Infinite all-perfect Being. Substance cannot produce substance, and therefore there is no such thing as creation; and everything which exists is either an attribute of God, or an affection of some attribute of Him, modified in this manner or in that. Beyond Him there is nothing, and nothing like Him or equal to Him; He therefore alone in Himself is absolutely free, uninfluenced by anything, for nothing is except Himself; and from Him and from His supreme power, essence, intelligence (for these words mean the same thing), all things have necessarily flowed, and will and must flow forever, in the same manner as from the nature of a triangle it follows, and has followed, and will follow from eternity to eternity, that the angles of it are equal to two right angles. It would seem as if the analogy were but an artificial play upon words, and that it was only metaphorically that in mathematical demonstration we speak of one thing as following from another. The properties of a curve or a triangle are what they are at all times, and the sequence is merely in the order in which they are successively known to ourselves. But according to Spinoza, this is the only true sequence; and what we call the universe, and all the series of incidents in earth or planet, are involved formally and mathematically in the definition of God.

Each attribute is infinite *suo genere*; and it is time that we should know distinctly the meaning which Spinoza attaches to that important word. Out of the infinite number of the attributes of God, two only, he says, are known to us—‘extension,’ and ‘thought,’ or ‘mind.’ Duration, even though it be without beginning or end, is not an attribute; it is not even a real

thing. Time has no relation to Being, conceived mathematically; it would be absurd to speak of circles or triangles as any older to-day than they were at the beginning of the world. These and everything of the same kind are conceived, as Spinoza rightly says, *sub quâdam specie æternitatis*. But extension, or substance extended, and thought, or substance perceiving, are real, absolute, and objective. We must not confound extension with body; for though body be a mode of extension, there is extension which is not body, and it is infinite because we cannot conceive it to be limited except by itself—or, in other words, to be limited at all. And as it is with extension, so it is with mind, which is also infinite with the infinity of its object. Thus there is no such thing as creation, or no beginning or end. All things of which our faculties are cognizant under one or other of these attributes are produced from God, and in Him they have their being, and without Him they would cease to be.

Proceeding by steps of rigid demonstration (and most admirably indeed is the form of the philosophy adapted to the spirit of it), we learn that God is the only *causa libera*; that no other thing or being has any power of self-determination; all moves by fixed laws of causation, motive upon motive, act upon act; there is no free will, and no contingency; and however necessary it may be for our incapacity to consider future things as in a sense contingent (see *Tractat. Theol. Polit.* cap. iv. sec. 4), this is but one of the thousand convenient deceptions which we are obliged to employ with ourselves. God is the *causa immanens omnium*; He is not a personal being existing apart from the universe; but Himself in His own reality, He is expressed in the universe, which is His living garment. Keeping to the philosophical language of the time, Spinoza preserves the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura*,



*naturata*. The first is being in itself the attributes of substance as they are conceived simply and alone; the second is the infinite series of modifications which follow out of the properties of these attributes. And thus all which *is*, is what it is by an absolute necessity, and could not have been other than it is. God is free, because no causes external to Himself have power over Him; and as good men are most free when most a law to themselves, so it is no infringement on God's freedom to say that He *must* have acted as he has acted, but rather He is absolutely free because absolutely a law Himself to Himself.

Here ends the first book of Spinoza's Ethics—the book which contains, as we said, the *notiones simplicissimas*, and the primary and rudimental deductions from them. *His Dei naturam*, he says, in his lofty confidence, *ejusque proprietates explicui*. But, as if conscious that his method will never convince, he concludes this portion of his subject with an analytical appendix; not to explain or apologize, but to show us clearly, in practical detail, the position into which he has led us. The root, we are told, of all philosophical errors lies in our notion of final causes; we invert the order of nature, and interpret God's action through our own; we speak of His intentions, as if He were a man; we assume that we are capable of measuring them, and finally erect ourselves, and our own interests, into the centre and criterion of all things. Hence arises our notion of evil. If the universe be what this philosophy has described it, the perfection which it assigns to God is extended to everything, and evil is of course impossible; there is no shortcoming either in nature or in man; each person and each thing is exactly what it has the power to be, and nothing more. But men imagining that all things exist on their account, and perceiving their own interests, bodily and spiritual, capable of being variously affected, have con-

ceived these opposite influences to result from opposite and contradictory powers, and call what contributes to their advantage good, and whatever obstructs it, evil. For our convenience we form generic conceptions of human excellence, as archetypes after which to strive; and such of us as approach nearest to such archetypes are supposed to be virtuous, and those who are most remote from them to be wicked, But such generic abstractions are but *entia imaginationis*, and have no real existence. In the eyes of God each thing is what it has the means of being. There is no rebellion against Him, and no resistance of His will; in truth, therefore, there neither is nor can be such a thing as a bad action in the common sense of the word. Actions are good or bad, not in themselves, but as compared with the nature of the agent; what we censure in men, we tolerate and even admire in animals; and as soon as we are aware of our mistake in assigning to man a power of free volition, our notion of evil as a positive thing will cease to exist.

If I am asked (concludes Spinoza) why then all mankind were not created by God, so as to be governed solely by reason? it was because, I reply, there was to God no lack of matter to create all things from the highest to the lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of God's nature were ample enough to suffice for the production of all things which can be conceived by an Infinite Intelligence.

It is possible that readers who have followed us so far will now turn away from a philosophy which issues in such conclusions; resentful, perhaps, that it should have been ever laid before them at all, in language so little expressive of aversion and displeasure. We must claim, however, in Spinoza's name, the right which he claims for himself. His system must be judged as a whole; and whatever we may think ourselves would be the moral effect

of such doctrines if they were generally received, in his hands and in his heart they are worked into maxims of the purest and loftiest morality. And at least we are bound to remember that some account of this great mystery of evil there must be, and although familiarity with commonly-received explanations may disguise from us the difficulties with which they too, as well as that of Spinoza, are embarrassed, such difficulties none the less exist. The fact is the grand perplexity, and for ourselves we acknowledge that of all theories about it Spinoza's would appear to us the least irrational, setting conscience, and the voice of conscience, aside. The objections, with the replies to them, are well drawn out in the correspondence with William de Blyenburg. It will be seen at once with how little justice the denial of evil as a positive thing can be called equivalent to denying it relatively to man, or to confusing the moral distinctions between virtue and vice.

We speak (writes Spinoza, in answer to Blyenburg, who had urged something of the kind), we speak of this or that man having done a wrong thing, when we compare him with a general standard of humanity; but inasmuch as God neither perceives things in such abstract manner, nor forms to Himself such generic definitions, and since there is no more reality in anything than God has assigned to it, it follows, surely, that the absence of good exists only in respect of man's understanding, not in respect of God's.

If this be so, then (replies Blyenburg), bad men fulfil God's will as well as good.

It is true (Spinoza answers) they fulfil it, yet not as the good nor as well as the good, nor are they to be compared with them. The better a thing or a person be, the more there is in him of God's spirit, and the more he expresses God's will; while the bad, being without that divine love which arises from the knowledge of God, and through which alone we are called (in respect of our understandings) his servants, are but as instruments in the hand of the artificer—they serve unconsciously, and are consumed in their service.

Spinoza, after all, is but stating in philosoph-

ical language the extreme doctrine of Grace; and St. Paul, if we interpret his real belief by the one passage so often quoted, in which he compares us to 'clay in the hands of the potter, who maketh one vessel to honor and another to dishonor,' may be accused with justice of having held the same opinion. If Calvinism be pressed to its logical consequences, it either becomes an intolerable falsehood, or it resolves itself into the philosophy of Spinoza. It is monstrous to call evil a positive thing, and to assert, in the same breath, that God has predetermined it—to tell us that He has ordained what He hates, and hates what He has ordained. It is incredible that we should be without power to obey Him except through His free grace, and yet be held responsible for our failures when that grace has been withheld. And it is idle to call a philosopher sacrilegious who has but systematized the faith which so many believe, and cleared it of its most hideous features.

Spinoza flinches from nothing, and disguises no conclusions either from himself or from his readers. We believe for ourselves that logic has no business with such questions; that the answer to them lies in the conscience and not in the intellect. Spinoza thinks otherwise; and he is at least true to the guide which he has chosen. Blyenburg presses him with instances of monstrous crime, such as bring home to the heart the natural horror of it. He speaks of Nero's murder of Agrippina, and asks if God can be called the cause of such an act as that.

God (replies Spinoza, calmly) is the cause of all things which have reality. If you can show that evil, errors, crimes express any real things, I agree readily that God is the cause of them; but I conceive myself to have proved that what constitutes the essence of evil is not a real thing at all, and therefore that God cannot be the cause of it. Nero's matricide was not a crime, in so far as it was a positive outward act. Orestes also killed his mother; and we do not judge Orestes as we judge Nero. The crime of the latter lay in his being without pity,



without obedience, without natural affection—none of which things express any positive essence, but the absence of it; and therefore God was not the cause of these, although He was the cause of the act and the intention.

But once for all (he adds), this aspect of things will remain intolerable and unintelligible as long as the common notions of free will remain unremoved.

And of course, and we shall all confess it, if these notions are as false as Spinoza supposes them—if we have no power to be anything but what we are, there neither is nor can be such a thing as moral evil; and what we call crimes will no more involve a violation of the will of God, they will no more impair His moral attributes if we suppose Him to have willed them, than the same actions, whether of lust, ferocity, or cruelty, in the inferior animals. There will be but, as Spinoza says, an infinite gradation in created things, the poorest life being more than none, the meanest active disposition something better than inertia, and the smallest exercise of reason better than mere ferocity. ‘The Lord has made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.’

The moral aspect of the matter will be more clear as we proceed. We pause, however, to notice one difficulty of a metaphysical kind, which is best disposed of in passing. Whatever obscurity may lie about the thing which we call Time (philosophers not being able to agree what it is, or whether properly it *is* anything), the words past, present, future, do undoubtedly convey some definite idea with them: things will be which are not yet, and have been which are no longer. Now, if everything which exists be a necessary mathematical consequence from the nature or definition of the One Being, we cannot see how there can be any time but the present, or how past and future have room for a meaning. God is, and therefore all properties of Him *are*, just as every property of a circle exists in it as soon as the circle exists. We may if we like for

convenience, throw our theorems into the future, and say, *e. g.* that if two lines in a circle cut each other, the rectangle under the parts of the one *will* equal that under the parts of the other. But we only mean in reality that these rectangles *are* equal; and the *future* relates only to our knowledge of the fact. Allowing, however, as much as we please, that the condition of England a hundred years hence lies already in embryo in existing causes, it is a paradox to say that such condition exists already in the sense in which the properties of the circle exist; and yet Spinoza insists on the illustration.

It is singular that he should not have noticed the difficulty; not that either it or the answer to it (which no doubt would have been ready enough) are likely to interest any person except metaphysicians, a class of thinkers, happily, which is rapidly diminishing.

We proceed to more important matters—to Spinoza's detailed theory of nature as exhibited in man and in man's mind. His theory for its bold ingenuity is by far the most remarkable which on this dark subject has ever been proposed. Whether we can believe it or not, is another question; yet undoubtedly it provides a solution for every difficulty; it accepts with equal welcome the extremes of materialism and of spiritualism: and if it be the test of the soundness of a philosophy that it will explain phenomena and reconcile contradictions, it is hard to account for the fact that a system which bears such a test so admirably, should nevertheless be so incredible as it is.

Most people have heard of the 'Harmonie Préétablie' of Leibnitz; it is borrowed without acknowledgment from Spinoza, and adapted to the Leibnitzian philosophy. 'Man,' says Leibnitz, 'is composed of mind and body; but what is mind and what is body, and what is their union? Substances so opposite in kind cannot effect one another; mind cannot act on

matter, or matter upon mind ; and the appearance of their reciprocal operation is an appearance only and a delusion." A delusion so general, however, required to be accounted for ; and Leibnitz accounted for it by supposing that God, in creating a world composed of material and spiritual phenomena, ordained that these several phenomena should proceed from the beginning in parallel lines side by side in a constantly corresponding harmony. The sense of seeing results, it appears to us, from the formation of a picture upon the retina. The motion of the arm or the leg appears to result from an act of will ; but in either case we mistake coincidence for causation. Between substances so wholly alien there can be no intercommunion ; and we only suppose that the object seen produces the idea, and that the desire produces the movement, because the phenomena of matter and the phenomena of spirit are so contrived as to flow always in the same order and sequence. This hypothesis, as coming from Leibnitz, has been, if not accepted, at least listened to respectfully ; because while taking it out of its proper place, he contrived to graft it upon Christianity ; and succeeded, with a sort of speculative legerdemain, in making it appear to be in harmony with revealed religion. Disguised as a philosophy of Predestination, and connected with the Christian doctrine of Retribution, it steps forward with a air of unconscious innocence, as if interfering with nothing which Christians generally believe. And yet, leaving as it does no larger scope for liberty or responsibility than when in the hands of Spinoza,\* Leibnitz, in our opinion,

\* Since these words were written a book has appeared in Paris by an able disciple of Leibnitz, which although it does not lead us to modify the opinion expressed in them, yet obliges us to give our reasons for speaking as we do. M. de Careil † has discovered in-

† *Réfutation Inédite de Spinoza.* Par Leibnitz. *Précédée d'une Mémoire*, par Foucher de Careil. Paris, 1854.

has only succeeded in making it infinitely more revolting. Spinoza could not regard the bad man as an object of Divine anger and a subject of retributory punishment. He was

the library at Hanover, a MS. in the handwriting of Leibnitz, containing a series of remarks on the book of a certain John Wachter. It does not appear who this John Wachter was, nor by what accident he came to have so distinguished a critic. If we may judge by the extracts at present before us, he seems to have been an absurd and extravagant person, who had attempted to combine the theology of the Cabbala with the very little which he was able to understand of the philosophy of Spinoza; and, as far as he is concerned, neither his writings nor the reflections upon them are of interest to any human being. The extravagance of Spinoza's followers, however, furnished Leibnitz with an opportunity of noticing the points on which he most disapproved of Spinoza himself; these few notices M. de Careil has now for the first time published as *The Refutation of Spinoza*, by Leibnitz. They are exceedingly brief and scanty; and the writer of them would assuredly have hesitated to describe an imperfect criticism by so ambitious a title. The modern editor, however must be allowed the privilege of a worshipper, and we will not quarrel with him for an exaggerated estimate of what his master had accomplished. We are indebted to his enthusiasm for what is at least a curious discovery, and we will not qualify the gratitude which he has earned by industry and good will. At the same time, the notes themselves confirm the opinion which we have always entertained, that Leibnitz did not understand Spinoza. Leibnitz did not understand him, and the followers of Leibnitz do not understand him now. If he were no more than what he is described in the book before us—if his metaphysics were 'miserable,' if his philosophy was absurd, and he himself nothing more than a second-rate disciple of Descartes—we can assure M. de Careil that we should long ago have heard the last of him.

There must be something else, something very different from this, to explain the position which he holds in Germany, or the fascination which his writings exerted over such minds as those of Lessing or of Göthe; the fact of so enduring an influence is more than a sufficient answer to mere depreciating criticism. This, however, is not a point which there is any us in pressing. Our present business is to justify the two assertions which we have made. First, that Leibnitz borrowed his *Theory of the Harmonie Préétablie* from Spinoza, without acknowledgment; and, secondly, that this theory is quite as inconsistent with religion as



not a Christian, and made no pretension to be considered such; and it did not occur to him to regard the actions of a being which, both with Leibnitz and himself, is (to use his own

is that of Spinoza, and only differs from it in disguising its real character.

First for the *Harmonie Préttablie*. Spinoza's *Ethics* appeared in 1677.; and we know that they were read by Leibnitz. In 1696, Leibnitz announced as a discovery of his own, a Theory of *The Communication of Substances*, which he illustrates in the following manner:—

‘Vous ne comprenez pas, dites-vous, comment jepourrois prouve, ce que j’ai avancé touchant la communication ou l’harmonie de deux substances aussi différentes que l’âme et le corps? Il est vrai que je crois en avoir trouvé le moyen; et voici comment je prétends vous satisfaire. Figurez-vous deux horloges ou montres qui s’accordent parfaitement. Or cela se peut faire de trois manières. La 1<sup>e</sup> consiste dans une influence mutuelle. La 2<sup>e</sup> est d’y attacher un ouvrier habile qui les redresse, et les mette d’accord à tous moments. La 3<sup>e</sup> est de fabriquer ces deux pendules avec tant d’art et de justesse, qu’on se puisse assurer de leur accord dans la suite. Mettez maintenant l’âme et le corps à la place de ces deux pendules; leur accord peut arriver l’une de ces trois manières. La voye d’influence est celle de la philosophie vulgaire; mais comme l’on ne sauroit concevoir des particules matérielles qui puissent passer d’une de ces substances dans l’autre, il faut abandonner ce sentiment. La voye de l’assistance continuelle du Createur est celle du système des causes occasionnelles; mais je tiens que c’est faire intervenir Deus ex machinâ dans une chose naturelle et ordinaire, on selon la raison il ne doit concourir, que de la manière qu’il concourt à toutes les autres choses naturelles. Ainsi il ne reste que mon hypothèse; c’est-à-dire que la voye de l’harmonie. Dieu a fait dès le commencement chacune de ces deux substances de telle nature, qu’en ne suivant que ces propres loix qu’elle a reçues avec son être, elle s’accorde pourtant avec l’autre tout comme s’il y avoit une influence mutuelle, ou comme si Dieu y mettoit toujours la main au-delà de son concours général. Après cela je n’ai pas besoin de rien prouver a moins qu’on ne veuille exiger que je prouve que Dieu est assez habile pour se servir de cette artifice,’ etc.—LEIBNITZ, *Opera*, p. 133. Berlin edition, 1840.

Leibnitz, as we have said, attempts to reconcile his system with Christianity, and therefore, of course, this theory of the relation of mind and body wears a very different aspect under his treatment, from what it wears under that of Spinoza. But Spinoza and Leibnitz both agree in this one peculiar conception in which they differ

expression) an *automaton spirituale*, as deserving a fiery indignation and everlasting vengeance.

‘Deus,’ according to Spinoza’s definition, from all other philosophers before or after them—that mind and body have no direct communication with each other, and that the phenomena of them merely correspond. M. de Careil says they both borrowed it from Descartes; but that is impossible. Descartes held no such opinion; it was the precise point of disagreement at which Spinoza parted from him; and therefore, since in point of date Spinoza had the advantage of Leibnitz, and we know that Leibnitz was acquainted with his writings, we must either suppose that he was directly indebted to Spinoza for an obligation which he ought to have acknowledged, or else, which is extremely improbable, that having read Spinoza and forgotten him, he afterwards re-originated for himself one of the most singular and peculiar notions which was ever offered to the belief of mankind.

So much for the first point, which, after all, is but of little moment. It is more important to ascertain whether, in the hands of Leibnitz, this theory can be any better reconciled with what is commonly meant by religion; whether, that is, the ideas of obedience and disobedience, merit and demerit, judgment and retribution, have any proper place under it. Spinoza makes no pretension to anything of the kind, and openly declares that these ideas are ideas merely, and human mistakes. Leibnitz, in opposition to him, endeavors to re-establish them in the following manner. He conceives that the system of the universe has been arranged and predetermined from the moment at which it was launched into being; from the moment at which God selected it, with all its details, as the best which could exist; but that it is carried on by the action of individual creatures (monads as he calls them) which, though necessarily obeying the laws of their existence, yet obey them with a character of spontaneity, which although ‘automata,’ are yet voluntary agents; and therefore, by the consent of their hearts to their actions, entitle themselves to moral praise or moral censure. The question is, whether by the mere assertion of the co-existence of these opposite qualities in the monad man, he has proved that such qualities can co-exist. In our opinion, it is like speaking of a circular eclipse, or of a quadrilateral triangle. There is a plain dilemma in these matters from which no philosophy can extricate itself. If men can incur guilt, their actions might be other than they are. If they cannot act otherwise than they do, they cannot incur guilt. So at least it appears to us; yet, in the darkness of our knowledge, we would not

'est ens constans infinitis attributis quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit.' Under each of these attributes *infinita sequuntur*, and everything which an infinite intelligence can conceive, and an infinite power can produce,—everything which follows as a possibility out of the Divine nature,—all things which have been, and are, and will be,—find expression and actual existence, not under one attribute only, but under each and every attribute. Language is so ill adapted to

complain merely of a theory, and if our earthly life were all in all, and the grave remained the extreme horizon of our hopes and fears, the *Harmonie Préétablie* might be tolerated as credible, and admired as ingenious and beautiful. It is when forcibly attached to a creed of the future, with which it has no natural connection, that it assumes its repulsive features. The world may be in the main good; while the good, from the unknown condition of its existence, may be impossible without some intermixture of evil; and although Leibnitz was at times staggered even himself by the misery and wickedness which he witnessed, and was driven to comfort himself with the reflection that this earth might be but one world in the midst of the universe, and perhaps the single chequered exception in an infinity of stainless globes, yet we would not quarrel with a hypothesis because it was imperfect; it might pass as a possible conjecture on a dark subject, when nothing better than conjecture was attainable.

But as soon as we are told that the evil in these human 'automata' being a necessary condition of this world which God has called into being, is yet infinitely detestable to God; that the creatures who suffer under the accursed necessity of committing sin are infinitely guilty in God's eyes, for doing what they have no power to avoid, and may therefore be justly punished in everlasting fire; we recoil against the paradox.

No disciple of Leibnitz will maintain, that unless he had found this belief in an eternity of penal retribution an article of the popular creed, such a doctrine would have formed a natural appendage of his system; and if M. de Careil desires to know why the influence of Spinoza, whose genius he considers so insignificant, has been so deep and so enduring, while Leibnitz has only secured for himself a mere admiration of his talents, it is because Spinoza was not afraid to be consistent, even at the price of the world's reprobation, and refused to purchase the applause of his own age at the sacrifice of sincerity.

explain such a system, that even to state it accurately is all but impossible, and analogies can only remotely suggest what such expressions mean. But it is as if it were said that the same thought might be expressed in an infinite variety of languages ; and not in words only, but in action, in painting, in sculpture, in music, in any form of any kind which can be employed as a means of spiritual embodiment. Of all these infinite attributes, two only, as we said, are known to us—extension and thought. Material phenomena are phenomena of extension ; and to every modification of extension an idea corresponds under the attribute of thought. Out of such a compound as this is formed man, composed of body and mind ; two parallel and correspondent modifications eternally answering one another. And not man only, but all other beings and things are similarly formed and similarly animated ; the anima or mind of each varying according to the complicity of the organism of its material counterpart. Although body does not think, nor affect the mind's power of thinking, and mind does not control body, nor communicate to it either motion or rest or any influence from itself, yet body with all its properties is the object or ideate of mind : whatsoever body does, mind perceives ; and the greater the energizing power of the first, the greater the perceiving power of the second. And this is not because they are adapted one to the other by some inconceivable preordinating power, but because mind and body are *una et eadem res*, the one absolute being affected in one and the same manner, but expressed under several attributes ; the modes and affections of each attribute having that being for their cause, as he exists under that attribute of which they are modes, and no other ; idea being caused by idea, and body affected by body ; the image on the retina being produced by the object re-



flected upon it, the idea or image in our minds by the idea of that object, &c. &c.

A solution too remote from all ordinary ways of thinking on these matters is so difficult to grasp, that one can hardly speak of it as being probable, or as being improbable. Probability extends only to what we can imagine as possible, and Spinoza's theory seems to lie beyond the range within which our judgment can exercise itself. In our own opinion, indeed, as we have already said, the entire subject is one with which we have no business; and the explanation of our nature, if it is ever to be explained to us, is reserved till we are in some other state of existence. We do not disbelieve Spinoza because what he suggests is in itself incredible. The chances may be millions to one against his being right; yet the real truth, if we knew it, would be probably at least as strange as his conception of it. But we are firmly convinced that of these questions, and of all like them, practical answers only lie within the reach of human faculties; and that in 'researches into the absolute' we are on the road which ends nowhere.

Among the difficulties, however, most properly, akin to this philosophy itself, there is one most obvious, viz., that if the attributes of God be infinite, and each particular thing is expressed under them all, then mind and body express but an infinitesimal portion of the nature of each of ourselves; and this human nature exists, (*i. e.*, there exists corresponding modes of substance) in the whole infinity of the Divine nature under attributes differing each from each, and all from mind and all from body. That this must be so follows from the definition of the Infinite Being, and the nature of the distinction between the two attributes which are known to us; and if this be so, why does not the mind perceive something of all these other attributes? The objection is well expressed by a correspondent

(Letter 67) :—‘ It follows from what you say,’ a friend writes to Spinoza, ‘ that the modification which constitutes my mind, and that which constitutes my body, although it be one and the same modification, yet must be expressed in an infinity of ways : one way by thought, a second way by extension, a third by some attribute unknown to me, and so on to infinity ; the attributes being infinite in number, and the order and connection of modes being the same in them all. Why, then, does the mind perceive the modes of but one attribute only ? ’

Spinoza’s answer is curious : unhappily, a fragment of his letter only is extant, so that it is too brief to be satisfactory :—

In reply to your difficulty (he says), although each particular thing be truly in the Infinite mind, conceived in Infinite modes, the Infinite idea answering to all these cannot constitute one and the same mind of any single being, but must constitute Infinite minds. No one of all these Infinite ideas has any connection with another.

He means, we suppose, that God’s mind only perceives, or can perceive, things under their Infinite expression, and that the idea of each several mode, under whatever attribute, constitutes a separate mind.

We do not know that we can add anything to this explanation ; the difficulty lies in the audacious sweep of the speculation itself ; we will, however, attempt an illustration, although we fear it will be to illustrate *obscurum per obscurius*. Let A B C D be four out of the Infinite number of the Divine attributes. A the attribute of mind ; B the attribute of extension : C and D other attributes, the nature of which is not known to us. Now, A, as the attribute of mind, is that which perceives all which takes place under B C and D, but it is only as it exists in God that it forms the universal consciousness of all attributes at once. In its modifications it is combined

separately with the modifications of each, constituting in combination with the modes of each attribute a separate being. As forming the mind of B, A perceives what takes place in B, but not what takes place in C or D. Combined with B, it forms the soul of the human body, and generally the soul of all modification of extended substance; combined with C, it forms the soul of some other analogous being; combined with D, again of another; but the combinations are only in pairs, in which A is constant. A and B make one being, A and C another, A and D a third; but B will not combine with C, nor C with D; each attribute being, as it were, conscious only of itself. And therefore, although to those modifications of mind and extension which we call ourselves, there are corresponding modifications under C and D, and generally each of the Infinite attributes of God, each of ourselves being in a sense Infinite—nevertheless, we neither have nor can have any knowledge of ourselves in this Infinite aspect, our actual consciousness being limited to the phenomena of sensible experience.

English readers, however, are likely to care little for all this; they will look to the general theory, and judge of it as its aspect affects them. And first, perhaps, they will be tempted to throw aside as absurd the notion that their bodies go through the many operations which they experience them to do, undirected by their minds. It is a thing, they may say, at once preposterous and incredible. It is, however, less absurd than it seems; and, though we could not persuade ourselves to believe it, absurd in the sense of having nothing to be said for it, it certainly is not. It is far easier, for instance, to imagine the human soul capable by its own virtue, and by the laws of material organization, of building a house, than of *thinking*; and yet men are allowed to say that the body thinks, without being regarded as candidates for a lunatic asylum. We see the

seed shoot up into stem and leaf and throw out flowers ; we observe it fulfilling processes of chemistry more subtle than were ever executed in Liebig's laboratory, and producing structures more cunning than man can imitate. The bird builds her nest, the spider shapes out its delicate web, and stretches it in the path of his prey ; directed not by calculating thought, as we conceive ourselves to be, but by some motive influence, our ignorance of the nature of which we disguise from ourselves, and call it instinct, but which we believe at least to be some property residing in the organization. We are not to suppose that the human body, the most complex of all material structures, has slighter powers in it than the bodies of a seed, a bird, or an insect. Let us listen to Spinoza himself :

There can be no doubt (he says) that this hypothesis is true ; but unless I can prove it from experience, men will not, I fear, be induced even to reflect upon it calmly, so persuaded are they that it is by the mind only that their bodies are set in motion. And yet what body can or cannot do no one has yet determined ; body, *i. e.*, by the law of its own nature, and without assistance from mind. No one has so probed the human frame as to have detected all its functions and exhausted the list of them ; there are powers exhibited by animals far exceeding human sagacity ; and, again, feats are performed by somnambulists on which in the waking state the same persons would never venture—itsself a proof that body is able to accomplish what mind can only admire. Men *say* that mind moves body, but how it moves it they cannot tell, or what degree of motion it can impart to it ; so that, in fact, they do not know what they say, and are only confessing their own ignorance in specious language. They will answer me, that whether or not they understand how it can be, yet that they are assured by plain experience that unless mind could perceive, body would be altogether inactive ; they know that it depends on the mind whether the tongue speaks or is silent. But do they not equally experience that if their bodies are paralyzed their minds cannot think?—that if their bodies are asleep their minds are without power?—that their minds are not at all times equally able to exert themselves even on the same subject, but depend on the state of their bodies ? And as for experience proving that the members of the body can be controlled by the



mind, I fear experience proves very much the reverse. But it is absurd (they rejoin) to attempt to explain from the mere laws of body such things as pictures, or palaces, or works of art; the body could not build a church unless mind directed it. I have shown, however, that we do not yet know what body can or cannot do, or what would naturally follow from the structure of it; that we experience in the feats of somnambulists something which antecedently to that experience would have seemed incredible. This fabric of the human body exceeds infinitely any contrivance of human skill, and an infinity of things, as I have already proved, ought to follow from it.

We are not concerned to answer this reasoning, although if the matter were one the debating of which could be of any profit, it would undoubtedly have its weight, and would require to be patiently considered. Life is too serious, however, to be wasted with impunity over speculations in which certainty is impossible, and in which we are trifling with what is inscrutable.

Objections of a far graver kind were anticipated by Spinoza himself, when he went on to gather out of his philosophy 'that the mind of man being part of the Infinite intelligence, when we say that such a mind perceives this thing or that, we are, in fact, saying that God perceives it, not as he is Infinite, but as he is represented by the nature of this or that idea; and similarly, when we say that a man does this or that action, we say that God does it, not *quâ* he is Infinite, but *quâ* he is expressed in that man's nature.' 'Here,' he says, 'many readers will no doubt hesitate, and many difficulties will occur to them in the way of such a supposition.'

We confess that we ourselves are among these hesitating readers. As long as the Being whom Spinoza so freely names remains surrounded with the associations which in this country we bring with us out of our childhood, not all the logic in the world would make us listen to language such as this. It is not so—we know it, and that is enough. We are well

aware of the phalanx of difficulties which lie about our theistic conceptions. They are quite enough, if religion depended on speculative consistency, and not in obedience of life, to perplex and terrify us. What are we? what *is* anything? If it be not Divine—what is it then? If created—out of what is it created? and how created—and why? These questions, and others far more momentous which we do not enter upon here, may be asked and cannot be answered; but we cannot any the more consent to Spinoza on the ground that he alone consistently provides an answer; because, as we have said again and again, we do not care to have them answered at all. Conscience is the single tribunal to which we choose to be referred, and conscience declares imperatively that what he says is not true. It is painful to speak of all this, and as far as possible we designedly avoid it. Pantheism is not Atheism, but the Infinite Positive and the infinite Negative are not so remote from one another in their practical bearings; only let us remember that we are far indeed from the truth if we think that God to Spinoza was *nothing else* but that world which we experience. It is but one of infinite expressions of him—a conception which makes us giddy in the effort to realize it.

We have arrived at last at the outwork of the whole matter in its bearings upon life and human duty. It was in the search after this last, that Spinoza, as we said, travelled over so strange a country, and we now expect his conclusions. To discover the true good of man, to direct his actions to such ends as will secure to him real and lasting felicity, and, by a comparison of his powers with the objects offered to them, to ascertain how far they are capable of arriving at these objects, and by what means they can best be trained towards them—is the aim which Spinoza assigns to philosophy. ‘Most people,’ he adds, ‘deride or vilify their nature; it is a better thing to endeavor to

understand it; and however extravagant my proceeding may be thought, I propose to analyze the properties of that nature as if it were a mathematical figure.' Mind being, as he conceives himself to have shown, nothing else than the idea corresponding to this or that affection of body, we are not, therefore, to think of it as a faculty, but simply and merely as an act. There is no general power called intellect, any more than there is any general abstract volition, but only *hic et ille intellectus et hæc et illa volitio*.

Again, by the word Mind is understood not merely an act or acts of will or intellect, but all forms also of consciousness of sensation or emotion. The human body being composed of many small bodies, the mind is similarly composed of many minds, and the unity of body and of mind depends on the relation which the component portions maintain towards each other. This is obviously the case with body; and if we can translate metaphysics into common experience, it is equally the case with mind. There are pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect; a thousand tastes, tendencies, and inclinations form our mental composition; and since one contradicts another, and each has a tendency to become dominant, it is only in the harmonious equipoise of their several activities in their due and just subordination, that any unity of action or consistency of feeling is possible. After a masterly analysis of all these tendencies (the most complete by far which has ever been made by any moral philosopher), Spinoza arrives at the principles under which unity and consistency can be obtained as the condition upon which a being so composed can look for any sort of happiness; and these principles, arrived at as they are by a route so different, are the same, and are proposed by Spinoza as being the same, as those of the Christian religion.

It might seem impossible in a system which

binds together in so inexorable a sequence the relations of cause and effect, to make a place for the action of self-control ; but consideration will show that, however vast the difference between those who deny and those who affirm the liberty of the will (in the sense in which the expression is usually understood), it is not a difference which affects the conduct or alters the practical bearings of it. Conduct may be determined by laws—laws as absolute as those of matter ; and yet the one as well as the other may be brought under control by a proper understanding of those laws. Now, experience seems plainly to say that while all our actions arise out of desire—that whatever we do, we do for the sake of something which we wish to be or to obtain—we are differently affected towards what is proposed to us as an object of desire, in proportion as we understand the nature of such object in itself and its consequences. The better we know, the better we act ; and the fallacy of all common arguments against necessitarianism lies in the assumption that it leaves no room for self-direction : it merely insists, in exact conformity with experience, on the conditions under which self-determination is possible. Conduct, according to the necessitarian, depends on knowledge. Let a man certainly know that there is poison in the cup of wine before him, and he will not drink it. By the law of cause and effect, his desire for the wine is overcome by the fear of the pain or the death which will follow. So with everything which comes before him. Let the consequences of any action be clear, definite, and inevitable, and though Spinoza would not say that the knowledge of them will be absolutely sufficient to determine the conduct (because the clearest knowledge may be overborne by violent passion, yet it is the best which we have to trust to, and will do much if it cannot do all.



On this hypothesis, after a diagnosis of the various tendencies of human nature, called commonly the passions and affections, he returns upon the nature of our ordinary knowledge to derive out of it the means for their subordination. All these tendencies of themselves seek their own objects—seek them blindly and immoderately; and the mistakes and the unhappinesses of life arise from the want of due understanding of these objects, and a just moderation of the desire for them. His analysis is remarkably clear, but it is too long for us to enter upon it; the important thing being the character of the control which is to be exerted. To arrive at this, he employs a distinction of great practical utility, and which is peculiarly his own.

Following his tripartite division of knowledge, he finds all kinds of it arrange themselves under one of two classes, and to be either adequate or inadequate. By adequate knowledge he does not mean what is exhaustive and complete, but what, as far as it goes, is distinct and unconfused: by inadequate, he means what we know merely as fact either derived from our own sensations or from the authority of others, while of the connection of it with other facts, of the causes, effects, or meaning of it we know nothing. We may have an adequate idea of a circle, though we are unacquainted with all the properties which belong to it; we conceive it distinctly as a figure generated by the rotation of a line, one end of which is stationary. Phenomena, on the other hand, however made known to us—phenomena of the senses, and phenomena of experience, as long as they remain phenomena merely, and unseen in any higher relation—we can never know except as inadequately. We cannot tell what outward things are by coming in contact with certain features of them. We have a very imperfect acquaintance even with our own bodies, and the sensations which we

experience of various kinds rather indicate to us the nature of these bodies themselves than of the objects which affect them. Now, it is obvious that the greater part of mankind act only upon knowledge of this latter kind. The amusements, even the active pursuits, of most of us remain wholly within the range of uncertainty, and, therefore, are full of hazard and precariousness: little or nothing issues as we expect. We look for pleasure and we find pain; we shun one pain and find a greater; and thus arises the ineffectual character which we so complain of in life—the disappointments, failures, mortifications which form the material of so much moral meditation on the vanity of the world. Much of all this is inevitable from the constitution of our nature. The mind is too infirm to be entirely occupied with higher knowledge. 'The conditions of life oblige us to act in many cases which cannot be understood by us except with the utmost inadequacy; and the resignation to the higher will which has determined all things in the wisest way, is imperfect in the best of us. Yet much is possible, if not all; and, although through a large tract of life 'there comes one event to all, to the wise and to the unwise,' 'yet wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness.' The phenomena of experience, after inductive experiment, and just and careful consideration, arrange themselves under laws uniform in their operation, and furnishing a guide to the judgment; and over all things, although the interval must remain unexplored forever, because what we would search into is Infinite, may be seen the beginning of all things, the absolute eternal God. '*Mens humana*,' Spinoza continues, '*quædam agit, quædam vero patitur*.' In so far as it is influenced by inadequate ideas—'*eatenus patitur*'—it is passive and in bondage, it is the sport of fortune and caprice: in so far as its ideas are adequate—'*eatenus agit*'—it is active, it is itself. While we are gov-

erned by outward temptations, by the casual pleasures, by the fortunes or the misfortunes of life, we are but instruments, yielding ourselves to be acted upon as the animal is acted on by its appetites, or the inanimate matter by the laws which bind it; we are slaves—instruments, it may be, of some higher purpose in the order of nature, but in ourselves nothing; instruments which are employed for a special work, and which are consumed in effecting it. So far, on the contrary, as we know clearly what we do, as we understand what we are, and direct our conduct not by the passing emotion of the moment, but by a grave, clear, and constant knowledge of what is really good, so far we are said to act—we are ourselves the spring of our own activity—we pursue the genuine well-being of our entire nature, and *that* we can always find, and it never disappoints us when found.

All things desire life; all things seek for energy, and fuller and ampler being. The component parts of man, his various appetites and passions, are seeking larger activity while pursuing each its immoderate indulgence; and it is the primary law of every single being that it so follows what will give it increased vitality. Whatever will contribute to such increase is the proper good of each; and the good of man as a united being is measured and determined by the effect of it upon his collective powers. The appetites gather power from their several objects of desire; but the power of the part is the weakness of the whole; and man as a collective person gathers life, being, and self-mastery only from the absolute good,—the source of all real good, and truth, and energy,—that is, God. The love of God is the extinction of all other loves and all other desires. To know God, as far as man can know him, is power, self-government, and peace. And this is virtue, and this is blessedness.

Thus, by a formal process of demonstration,

we are brought round to the old conclusions of theology; and Spinoza protests that it is no new doctrine which he is teaching, but that it is one which in various dialects has been believed from the beginning of the world. Happiness depends on the consistency and coherency of character, and that coherency can only be given by the knowledge of the One Being, to know whom is to know all things adequately, and to love whom is to have conquered every other inclination. The more entirely our minds rest on Him—the more distinctly we regard all things in their relation to Him, the more we cease to be under the dominion of external things; we surrender ourselves consciously to do His will, and as living men and not as passive things we become the instruments of His power. When the true nature and true causes of our affections become clear to us, they have no more power to influence us. The more we understand, the less can feeling sway us; we know that all things are what they are, because they are so constituted that they could not be otherwise, and we cease to be angry with our brother, because he disappoints us; we shall not fret at calamity, nor complain of fortune, because no such thing as fortune exists; and if we fail it is better than if we had succeeded, not perhaps for ourselves, yet for the universe. We cannot fear, when nothing can befall us except what God wills, and we shall not violently hope, when the future, whatever it be, will be the best which is possible. Seeing all things in their place in the everlasting order, Past and Future will not affect us. The temptation of present pleasure will not overcome the certainty of future pain, for the pain will be as sure as the pleasure, and we shall see all things under a rule of adamant. The foolish and the ignorant are led astray by the idea of contingency, and expect to escape the just issues of their actions; the wise man will



know that each action brings with it its inevitable consequences, which even God cannot change without ceasing to be Himself.

In such a manner, through all the conditions of life, Spinoza pursues the advantages which will accrue to man from the knowledge of God, God and man being what his philosophy has described them. His practical teaching is singularly beautiful; although much of its beauty is perhaps due to associations which have arisen out of Christianity, and which in the system of Pantheism have no proper abiding place. Retaining, indeed, all that is beautiful in Christianity, he even seems to have relieved himself of the more fearful features of the general creed. He acknowledges no hell, no devil, no positive and active agency at enmity with God; but sees in all things infinite gradations of beings, all in their way obedient, all fulfilling the part allotted to them. Doubtless a pleasant exchange and a grateful deliverance, if only we could persuade ourselves that a hundred pages of judiciously arranged demonstrations could really and indeed have worked it for us; if we could indeed believe that we could have the year without its winter, day without night, sunlight without shadow. Evil is unhappily too real a thing to be so disposed of.

But if we cannot believe Spinoza's system taken in its entire completeness, yet we may not blind ourselves to the disinterestedness and calm nobility which pervades his theories of human life and obligation. He will not hear of a virtue which desires to be rewarded. Virtue is the power of God in the human soul, and that is the exhaustive end of all human desire. '*Beatitudo non est virtutis pretium, sed ipsa virtus. Nihil aliud est quam ipsa animi acquiescentia, quæ ex Dei intuitivâ cognitione oritur.*' The same spirit of generosity exhibits itself in all his conclusions. The ordinary objects of desire, he says, are of such a kind that for one man to obtain them is for

another to lose them ; and this alone would suffice to prove that they are not what any man should labor after. But the fulness of God suffices for us all ; and he who possesses this good desires only to communicate it to every one and to make all mankind as happy as himself. And again :—‘ The wise men will not speak in society of his neighbor’s faults, and sparingly of the infirmity of human nature ; but he will speak largely of human virtue and human power, and of the means by which that nature can best be perfected, so to lead men to put away their fear and aversion with which they look on goodness, and learn with relieved hearts to love and desire it.’ And once more :—‘ He who loves God will not desire that God should love him in return with any partial or particular affection, for that is to desire that God for his sake should change His everlasting nature and become lower than himself.’

One grave element, indeed, of a religious faith would seem in such a system to be necessarily wanting. Where individual action is resolved into the modified activity of the Universal Being, all absorbing and all evolving, the individuality of the personal man is but an evanescent and unreal shadow. Such individuality as we now possess, whatever it be, might continue to exist in a future state as really as it exists in the present, and those to whom it belongs might be anxious naturally for its persistence. Yet it would seem that if the soul be nothing except the idea of a body actually existing, when that body is decomposed into its elements, the soul corresponding to it must accompany it into an answering dissolution. And this, indeed, Spinoza in one sense actually affirms, when he denies to the mind any power of retaining consciousness of what has befallen it in life, ‘ nisi durante corpore.’ But Spinozism is a philosophy full of surprises ; and our calculations of what *must* belong to it are perpetually

baffled. The imagination, the memory, the senses, whatever belongs to inadequate perception perish necessarily and eternally; and the man who has been the slave of his inclinations, who has no knowledge of God, and no active possession of himself, having in life possessed no personality, loses in death the appearance of it with the dissolution of the body.

Nevertheless, there is in God an idea expressing the essence of the mind, united to the mind as the mind is united in the body, and thus there is in the soul something of an everlasting nature which cannot utterly perish. And here Spinoza, as he often does in many of his most solemn conclusions, deserts for a moment the thread of his demonstrations, and appeals to the consciousness. In spite, of our non-recollection of what passed before our birth, in spite of all difficulties from the dissolution of the body, '*Nihilominus,*' he says, '*sentimus experimurque nos æternos esse. Nam mens non minus res illas sentit quas intelligendo concipit, quam quas in memoriâ habet. Mentis enim oculi quibus res videt observatque sunt ipsæ demonstrationes.*'

This perception, immediately revealed to the mind, falls into easy harmony with the rest of the system. As the mind is not a faculty, but an act or acts,—not a power of perception, but the perception itself, in its high union with the highest object (to use the metaphysical language which Coleridge has made popular and partially intelligible), the object and the subject become one. If knowledge be followed as it ought to be followed, and all objects of knowledge be regarded in their relations, to the One Absolute Being, the knowledge of particular outward things, of nature, or life, or history, becomes, in fact, knowledge of God; and the more complete or adequate such knowledge, the more the mind is raised above what is perishable in the phenomena to the idea or law which lies beyond them. It learns to dwell

exclusively upon the eternal, not upon the temporary; and being thus occupied with the everlasting laws, and its activity subsisting in its perfect union without them, it contracts in itself the character of the objects which possess it. Thus we are emancipated from the conditions of duration; we are liable even to death only *quatenus patimur*, as we are passive things and not active intelligences; and the more we possess such knowledge and are possessed by it, the more entirely the passive is superseded by the active—so that at last the human soul may ‘become of such a nature that the portion of it which will perish with the body in comparison with that of it which shall endure, shall be insignificant and *nullius momenti*.’ (Eth. v. 38.)

Such are the principal features of a philosophy, the influence of which upon Europe, direct and indirect, it is not easy to over-estimate. The account of it is far from being an account of the whole of Spinoza’s labors; his ‘*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*’ was the forerunner of German historical criticism; the whole of which has been but the application of principles laid down in that remarkable work. But this is not a subject on which, upon the present occasion, we have cared to enter. We have designedly confined ourselves to the system which is most associated with the name of its author. It is this which has been really powerful, which has stolen over the minds even of thinkers who imagine themselves most opposed to it. It has appeared in the absolute Pantheism of Schelling and Hegel, in the Pantheistic Christianity of Herder and Schleiermacher. Passing into practical life it has formed the strong, shrewd judgment of Goethe, while again it has been able to unite with the theories of the most extreme materialism.

It lies too, perhaps (and here its influence has been unmixedly good), at the bottom of



that more reverent contemplation of nature which has caused the success of our modern landscape painting, which inspired Wordsworth's poetry, and which, if ever physical science is to become an instrument of intellectual education, must first be infused into the lessons of nature; the sense of that 'something' inter-fused in the material world—

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;—  
A motion and a spirit, which impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

If we shrink from regarding the extended universe, with Spinoza, as an actual manifestation of Almighty God, we are unable to rest in the mere denial that it is this. We go on to ask what it *is*, and we are obliged to conclude thus much at least of it, that every smallest being was once a thought in His mind; and in the study of what He has made, we are really and truly studying a revelation of Himself.

It is not here, it is not on the physical, it is rather on the moral side, that the stumbling-block is lying; in that excuse for evil and for evil men which the necessitarian theory will furnish, disguise it in what fair-sounding words we will. So plain this is, that common-sense people, and especially English people, cannot bring themselves even to consider the question without impatience, and turn disdainfully and angrily from a theory which confuses their instincts of right and wrong. Although, however error on this side is infinitely less mischievous than on the other, no vehement error can exist in this world with impunity; and it does appear that in our common view of these matters we have closed our eyes to certain grave facts of experience, and have given the fatalist a vantage ground of real truth which we ought to have considered and allowed. At the risk of

tediousness we shall enter briefly into this unpromising ground. Life and the necessities of life are our best philosophers if we will only listen honestly to what they say to us; and dislike the lesson as we may, it is cowardice which refuses to hear it.

The popular belief is, that right and wrong lie before every man, and that he is free to choose between them, and the responsibility of choice rests with himself. The fatalist's belief is that every man's actions are determined by causes external and internal, over which he has no power, leaving no room for any moral choice whatever. The first is contradicted by facts, the second by the instinct of conscience. Even Spinoza allows that for practical purposes we are obliged to regard the future as contingent, and ourselves as able to influence it; and it is incredible that both our inward convictions and our outward conduct should be built together upon a falsehood. But if, as Butler says, whatever be the speculative account of the matter, we are practically forced to regard ourselves as free, this is but half the truth, for it may be equally said that practically we are forced to regard each other as *not* free; and to make allowance, every moment, for influences for which we cannot hold each other personally responsible. If not,—if every person of sound mind (in the common acceptation of the term) be equally able at all times to act right if only he *will*,—why all the care which we take of children? why the pains to keep them from bad society? why do we so anxiously watch their disposition, to determine the education which will best answer to it? Why in cases of guilt do we vary our moral censure according to the opportunities of the offender? Why do we find excuses for youth, for inexperience, for violent natural passion, for bad education, bad example? Why, except that we feel that all these things do affect the culpability of the guilty person, and that it is folly and

inhumanity to disregard them? But what we act upon in private life we cannot acknowledge in our ethical theories, and, while our conduct in detail is humane and just, we have been contented to gather our speculative philosophy out of the broad and coarse generalizations of political necessity. In the swift haste of social life we must indeed treat men as we find them. We have no time to make allowances; and the graduation of punishment by the scale of guilt is a mere impossibility. A thief is a thief in the law's eye though he has been trained from his cradle in the kennels of St. Giles; and definite penalties must be attached to definite acts, the conditions of political life not admitting of any other method of dealing with them. But it is absurd to argue from such rude necessity that each act therefore, by whomsoever committed, is of specific culpability. The act is one thing, the moral guilt is another. There are many cases in which, as Butler again allows, if we trace a sinner's history to the bottom, the guilt attributable to himself appears to vanish altogether.

This is plain matter of fact, and as long as we continue to deny or ignore it, there will be found men (not bad men, but men who love the truth as much as ourselves,) who will see only what we neglect, and will insist upon it, and build their systems upon it.

And again, if less obvious, yet not less real, are those natural tendencies which each of us brings with him into the world,—which we did not make, and yet which almost as much determine what we are to be, as the properties of the seed determine the tree which shall grow from it. Men are self-willed, or violent, or obstinate, or weak, or generous, or affectionate; there is as large difference in their dispositions as in the features of their faces. Duties which are easy to one, another finds difficult or impossible. It is with morals as it is with art. Two children are taught to draw; one learns with

ease, the other hardly or never. In vain the master will show him what to do. It seems so easy: it seems as if he had only to *will*, and the thing would be done; but it is not so. Between the desire and the execution lies the incapable organ which only wearily, and after long labor, imperfectly accomplishes what is required of it. And the same, *to a certain extent*, unless we will deny the patent facts of experience, holds true in moral actions. No wonder, therefore, that evaded or thrust aside as these things are in the popular beliefs, as soon as they are recognized in their full reality they should be mistaken for the whole truth, and the free-will theory be thrown aside as a chimera.

It may be said, and it often is said, that such reasonings are merely sophistical—that however we entangle ourselves in logic, we are conscious that we are free; we know—we are as sure as we are of our existence—that we have power to act this way or that way, exactly as we choose. But this is less plain than it seems; and if granted, it proves less than it appears to prove. It may be true that we can act as we choose, but can we *choose*? Is not our choice determined for us? We cannot determine from the fact, because we always *have chosen* as soon as we act, and we cannot replace the conditions in such a way as to discover whether we could have chosen anything else. The stronger motive may have determined our volition without our perceiving it; and if we desire to prove our independence of motive, by showing that we *can* choose something different from that which we should naturally have chosen, we still cannot escape from the circle, this very desire becoming, as Mr Hume observes, itself a *motive*. Again, consciousness of the possession of any power may easily be delusive; we can properly judge what our powers are only by what they have actually accomplished; we know what we *have*



done, and we may infer from having done it that our power was equal to what it achieved. But it is easy for us to overrate our strength if we try to measure our abilities in themselves. A man who can leap five yards may think that he can leap six; yet he may try and fail. A man who can write prose may only learn that he cannot write poetry from the badness of the verses which he produces. To the appeal to consciousness of power there is always an answer:—that we may believe ourselves to possess it, but that experience proves that we may be deceived.

There is, however, another group of feelings which cannot be set aside in this way, which do prove that, in some sense or other, in some degree or other, we are the authors of our own actions. It is one of the clearest of all inward phenomena, that where two or more courses involving moral issues are before us, whether we have a consciousness of *power* to choose between them or not, we have a consciousness that we *ought* to choose between them; a sense of duty—ὅτι δὲ τοῦτο πράττειν—as Aristotle expresses it, which we cannot shake off. Whatever this consciousness involves (and some measure of freedom it must involve or it is nonsense), the feeling exists within us, and refuses to yield before all the batteries of logic. It is not that of the two courses we know that one is in the long run the best, and the other more immediately tempting. We have a sense of obligation irrespective of consequence, the violation of which is followed again by a sense of self-disapprobation, of censure, of blame. In vain will Spinoza tell us that such feelings, incompatible as they are with the theory of powerlessness, are mistakes arising out of a false philosophy. They are primary facts of sensation most vivid in minds of most vigorous sensibility; and although they may be extinguished by habitual profligacy, or possibly,

perhaps, destroyed by logic, the paralysis of the conscience is no more a proof that it is not a real power of perceiving real things, than blindness is a proof that sight is not a real power. The perceptions of worth and worthlessness are not conclusions of reasoning, but immediate sensations like those of seeing and hearing; and although, like the other senses, they may be mistaken sometimes in the accounts they render to us, the fact of the existence of such feelings at all proves that there is something which corresponds to them. If there be any such things as 'true ideas,' or clear, distinct perceptions at all, this of praise and blame is one of them, and according to Spinoza's own rule we must accept what it involves. And it involves that somewhere or other the influence of causes ceases to operate, and that some degree of power there is in men of self-determination, by the amount of which, and not by their specific actions, moral merit or demerit is to be measured. Speculative difficulties remain in abundance. It will be said in a case, *e. g.* of moral trial, that there may have been *power*; but was there *power enough* to resist the temptation? If there was, then it was resisted. If there was not, there was no responsibility. We must answer again from practical instinct. We refuse to allow men to be considered all equally guilty who have committed the same faults; and we insist that their actions must be measured against their opportunities. But a similar conviction assures us that there is somewhere a point of freedom. Where that point is—where other influences terminate, and responsibility begins—will always be of intricate and often impossible solution. But if there be such a point at all, it is fatal to necessitarianism, and man is what he has been hitherto supposed to be—an exception in the order of nature, with a power not differing in degree but differing in kind from those of other crea-

tures. Moral life, like all life, is a mystery ; and as to anatomize the body will not reveal the secret of animation, so with the actions of the moral man. The spiritual life, which alone gives them meaning and being, glides away before the logical dissecting knife, and leaves it but a corpse to work upon.





## THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES.\*

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To be entirely just in our estimate of other ages is not difficult—it is impossible. Even what is passing in our presence we see but through a glass darkly. The mind as well as the eye adds something of its own, before an image, even of the clearest object, can be painted upon it.

And in historical inquiries, the most instructed thinkers have but a limited advantage over the most illiterate. Those who know the most, approach least to agreement. The most careful investigations are diverging roads—the further men travel upon them, the greater the interval by which they are divided. In the eyes of David Hume the history of the Saxon Princes is ‘the scuffling of kites and crows.’ Father Newman would mortify the conceit of a degenerate England by pointing to the sixty saints and the hundred confessors who were trained in her royal palaces for the Calendar of the Blessed. How vast a chasm yawns between these two conceptions of the same era! Through what common term can the student pass from one into the other?

Or, to take an instance yet more noticeable. The history of England scarcely interests Mr. Macaulay before the Revolution of the seventeenth century. To Lord John Russell, the Reformation was the first outcome from cen-

\* From *Fraser's Magazine*, 1857.

turies of folly and ferocity ; and Mr. Hallam's more temperate language softens, without concealing, a similar conclusion. These writers have all studied what they describe. Mr. Carlyle has studied the same subject with power at least equal to theirs, and to him the greatness of English character was waning with the dawn of English literature ; the race of heroes was already failing. The era of action was yielding before the era of speech.

All these views may seem to ourselves exaggerated ; we may have settled into some moderate *via media*, or have carved out our own ground on an original pattern ; but if we are wise, the differences in other men's judgments will teach us to be diffident. The more distinctly we have made history bear witness in favor of our particular opinions, the more we have multiplied the chances against the truth of our own theory.

Again, supposing that we have made a truce with 'opinions,' properly so called ; supposing we have satisfied ourselves that it is idle to quarrel upon points on which good men differ, and that it is better to attend rather to what we certainly know ; supposing that, either from superior wisdom, or from the conceit of superior wisdom, we have resolved that we will look for human perfection neither exclusively in the Old World nor exclusively in the New—neither among Catholics nor Protestants, among Whigs or Tories, heathens or Christians—that we have laid aside accidental differences, and determined to recognize only moral distinctions, to love moral worth, and to hate moral evil, wherever we find them ;—even supposing all this, we have not much improved our position—we cannot leap from our shadow.

Eras, like individuals, differ from one another in the species of virtue which they encourage. In one age, we find the virtues of the warrior ; in the next, of the saint. The ascetic and the soldier in their turn disappear ; an industrial

era succeeds, bringing with it the virtues of common sense, of grace, and refinement. There is the virtue of energy and command, there is the virtue of humility and patient suffering. All these are different, and all are, or may be, of equal moral value; yet, from the constitution of our minds, we are so framed that we cannot equally appreciate all; we sympathize instinctively with the person who most represents our own ideal—with the period when the graces which most harmonize with our own tempers have been especially cultivated. Further, if we leave out of sight these refinements, and content ourselves with the most popular conceptions of morality, there is this immeasurable difficulty—so great, yet so little considered,—that goodness is positive as well as negative, and consists in the active accomplishment of certain things which we are bound to do, as well as in the abstaining from things we are not bound not to do. And here the warp and woof vary in shade and pattern. Many a man, with the help of circumstances, may pick his way clear through life, having never violated one prohibitive commandment, and yet at last be fit only for the place of the unprofitable servant—he may not have committed either sin or crime, yet never have felt the pulsation of a single unselfish emotion. Another, meanwhile, shall have been hurried by an impulsive nature into fault after fault—shall have been reckless, improvident, perhaps profligate, yet be fitter after all for the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisee—fitter, because against the catalogue of faults there could perhaps be set a fairer list of acts of comparative generosity and self-forgetfulness—fitter, because to those who love much, much is forgiven. Fielding had no occasion to make Blifil, behind his decent coat, a traitor and a hypocrite. It would have been enough to have colored him in and out alike in the steady hues of selfishness, afraid of offending the upper powers as he was afraid

of offending Allworthy—not from any love for what was good, but solely because it would be imprudent—because the pleasure to be gained was not worth the risk of consequences. Such a Blifil would have answered the novelist's purpose—for he would have remained a worse man in the estimation of some of us than Tom Jones.

So the truth is ; but unfortunately it is only where accurate knowledge is stimulated by affection, that we are able to feel it. Persons who live beyond our own circle, and, still more, persons who have lived in another age, receive what is called justice, not charity ; and justice is supposed to consist in due allotments of censure for each special act of misconduct, leaving merit unrecognized. There are many reasons for this harsh method of judging. We must decide of men by what we know, and it is easier to know faults than to know virtues. Faults are specific, easily described, easily appreciated, easily remembered. And again, there is, or may be, hypocrisy in virtue ; but no one pretends to vice who is not vicious. The bad things which can be proved of a man we know to be genuine. He was a spendthrift, he was an adulterer, he gambled, he equivocated. These are blots positive, unless untrue, and when they stand alone, tinge the whole character.

This also is to be observed in historical criticism. All men feel a necessity of being on some terms with their conscience, at their own expense or at another's. If they cannot part with their faults, they will at least call them by their right name when they meet with such faults elsewhere ; and thus, when they find account of deeds of violence or sensuality, of tyranny, of injustice of man to man, of great and extensive suffering, or any of those other misfortunes which the selfishness of men has at various times occasioned, they will vituperate the doers of such things, and the age which



has permitted them to be done, with the full emphasis of virtuous indignation, while all the time they are themselves doing things which will be described, with no less justice, in the same colors, by an equally virtuous posterity.

Historians are fond of recording the supposed sufferings of the poor in the days of serfdom and villenage; yet the records of the strikes of the last ten years, when told by the sufferers, contain pictures no less fertile in tragedy. We speak of famines and plagues under the Tudors and Stuarts; but the Irish famine, and the Irish plague of 1847, the last page of such horrors which has yet been turned over, is the most horrible of all. We can conceive a description of England during the year which has just closed over us (1856), true in all its details, containing no one statement which can be challenged, no single exaggeration which can be proved; and this description, if given without the correcting traits, shall make ages to come marvel why the Cities of the Plain were destroyed, and England was allowed to survive. The frauds of trusted men, high in power and high in supposed religion; the wholesale poisonings; the robberies; the adulteration of food—nay, of almost everything exposed for sale—the cruel usage of women—children murdered for the burial fees—life and property insecure in open day in the open streets—splendor such as the world never saw before upon earth, with vice and squalor crouching under its walls—let all this be written down by an enemy, or let it be ascertained hereafter by the investigation of a posterity which desires to judge us as we generally have judged our forefathers, and few years will show darker in the English annals than the year which we have just left behind us. Yet we know, in the honesty of our hearts, how unjust such a picture would be. Our future advocate, if we are so happy as to find one, may not be able to disprove a single article in the indictment; and

yet we know that, as the world goes, he will be right if he marks the year with a white stroke—as one in which, on the whole, the moral harvest was better than an average.

Once more : our knowledge of any man is always inadequate—even of the unit which each of us calls himself ; and the first condition under which we can know a man at all is, that he be in essentials something like ourselves ; that our own experience be an interpreter which shall open the secrets of his experience ; and it often happens, even among our contemporaries, that we are altogether baffled. The Englishman and the Italian may understand each other's speech, but the language of each other's ideas has still to be learnt. Our long failures in Ireland have arisen from a radical incongruity of character which has divided the Celt from the Saxon. And again, in the same country, the Catholic will be a mystery to the Protestant, and the Protestant to the Catholic. Their intellects have been shaped in opposite moulds ; they are like instruments which cannot be played in concert. In the same way, but in a far higher degree, we are divided from the generations which have preceded us in this planet—we try to comprehend a Pericles or a Cæsar—an image rises before us which we seem to recognize as belonging to our common humanity. There is this feature which is familiar to us—and this—and this. We are full of hope ; the lineaments, one by one, pass into clearness ; when suddenly the figure becomes enveloped in a cloud—some perplexity crosses our analysis, baffling it utterly, the phantom which we have evoked dies away before our eyes, scornfully mocking our incapacity to master it.

The English antecedent to the Reformation are nearer to us than Greeks or Romans ; and yet there is a large interval between the baron who fought at Barnet field, and his polished descendant in a modern drawing-room. The

scale of appreciation and the rule of judgment—the habits, the hopes, the fears, the emotions—have utterly changed.

In perusing modern histories, the present writer has been struck dumb with wonder at the facility with which men will fill in chasms in their information with conjecture; will guess at the motives which have prompted actions; will pass their censures, as if all secrets of the past lay out on an open scroll before them. He is obliged to say for himself that, wherever he has been fortunate enough to discover authentic explanations of English historical difficulties, it is rare indeed that he has found any conjecture, either of his own or of any other modern writer, confirmed. The true motive has almost invariably been of a kind which no modern experience could have suggested.

Thoughts such as these form a hesitating prelude to an expression of opinion on a controverted question. They will serve, however, to indicate the limits within which the said opinion is supposed to be hazarded. And in fact, neither in this nor in any historical subject is the conclusion so clear that it can be enunciated in a definite form. The utmost which can be safely hazarded with history is to relate honestly ascertained facts, with only such indications of a judicial sentence upon them as may be suggested in the form in which the story is arranged.

Whether the monastic bodies of England, at the time of their dissolution, were really in that condition of moral corruption which is laid to their charge in the Act of Parliament by which they were dissolved, is a point which it seems hopeless to argue. Roman Catholic, and indeed almost all English, writers who are not committed to an unfavorable opinion by the ultra-Protestantism of their doctrines, seem to have agreed of late years that the accusations, if not false, were enormously exaggerated. The dissolution, we are told, was

a predetermined act of violence and rapacity ; and when the reports and the letters of the visitors are quoted in justification of the Government, the discussion is closed with the dismissal of every unfavorable witness from the court, as venal, corrupt, calumnious—in fact, as a suborned liar. Upon these terms the argument is easily disposed of ; and if it were not that truth is in all matters better than falsehood, it would be idle to reopen a question which cannot be justly dealt with. No evidence can affect convictions which have been arrived at without evidence—and why should we attempt a task which it is hopeless to accomplish ? It seems necessary, however, to reassert the actual state of the surviving testimony from time to time, if it be only to sustain the links of the old traditions ; and the present paper will contain one or two pictures of a peculiar kind, exhibiting the life and habits of those institutions, which have been lately met with chiefly among the unprinted Records.—In anticipation of any possible charge of unfairness in judging from isolated instances, we disclaim simply all desire to judge—all wish to do anything beyond relating certain ascertained stories. Let it remain, to those who are perverse enough to insist upon it, an open question whether the monasteries were more corrupt under Henry the Eighth than they had been four hundred years earlier. The dissolution would have been equally a necessity ; for no reasonable person would desire that bodies of men should have been maintained for the only business of singing masses, when the efficacy of masses was no longer believed. Our present desire is merely this—to satisfy ourselves whether the Government, in discharging a duty which could not be dispensed with, condescended to falsehood in seeking a vindication for themselves which they did not require ; or whether they had cause really to believe the majority of the monastic bodies to be as they



affirmed—whether, that is to say, there really were such cases either of flagrant immorality, neglect of discipline, or careless waste and prodigality, as to justify the general censure which was pronounced against the system by the Parliament and the Privy Council.

Secure in the supposed completeness with which Queen Mary's agents destroyed the Records of the visitation under her father, Roman Catholic writers have taken refuge in a disdainful denial; and the Anglicans, who for the most part, while contented to enjoy the fruits of the Reformation, detest the means by which it was brought about, have taken the same view. Bishop Latimer tells us, that, when the Report of the visitors of the abbeys was read in the Commons House, there rose from all sides one long cry of 'Down with them.' But Bishop Latimer, in the opinion of High Churchmen, is not to be believed. Do we produce letters of the visitors themselves, we are told that they are the slanders prepared to justify a preconceived purpose of spoliation. No witness, it seems, will be admitted unless it be the witness of a friend. Unless some enemy of the Reformation can be found to confess the crimes which made the Reformation necessary, the crimes themselves are to be regarded as unproved. This is a hard condition. We appeal to Wolsey. Wolsey commenced the suppression. Wolsey first made public the infamies which disgraced the Church; while, notwithstanding, he died the devoted servant of the Church. This evidence is surely admissible? But no: Wolsey, too, must be put out of court. Wolsey was a courtier and a time-server. Wolsey was a tyrant's minion. Wolsey was—in short, we know not what Wolsey was, or what he was not. Who can put confidence in a charlatan? Behind the bulwarks of such objections, the champion of the abbeys may well believe himself secure.

And yet, unreasonable though these de-

mands may be, it happens, after all, that we are able partially to gratify them. It is strange that, of all extant accusations against any one of the abbeys, the heaviest is from a quarter which even Lingard himself would scarcely call suspicious. No picture left us by Henry's visitors surpasses, even if it equals, a description of the condition of the Abbey of St Albans, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, drawn by Morton, Henry the Seventh's minister, Cardinal Archbishop, Legate of the Apostolic See, in a letter addressed by him to the Abbot or St Albans himself. We must request our reader's special attention for the next two pages.

In the year 1489, Pope Innocent the Eighth—moved with the enormous stories which reached his ear of the corruption of the houses of religion in England—granted a commission to the Archbishop of Canterbury to make inquiries whether these stories were true, and to proceed to correct and reform as might seem good to him. The regular clergy were exempt from episcopal visitation, except under especial directions from Rome.\* The occasion had appeared so serious as to make extraordinary interference necessary.

On the receipt of the Papal commission, Cardinal Morton, among other letters, wrote the following letter :—

John, by Divine permission, Archbishop of Cantebury Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic See, to William, Abbot of the Monastery of St Albans, greeting.

We have received certain letters under lead, the copies whereof we herewith send you, from our most holy Lord and Father in Christ, Innocent, by Divine Providence Pope, the eighth of that name. We therefore, John, the Archbishop, the visitor, reformer, inquisitor, and judge therein mentioned, in reverence for the Apostolic See, have taken upon ourselves the burden of enforcing the said commission; and have determined that we will proceed by, and according to, the full force, tenor, and effect of the same.

And it has come to our ears, being at once publicly

notorious and brought before us upon the testimony of many witnesses worthy of credit, that you, the abbot afore-mentioned, have been of long time noted and diffamed, and do yet continue so noted, of simony, of usury, of dilapidation and waste of the goods, revenues, and possessions of the said monastery, and of certain other enormous crimes and excesses hereafter written. In the rule, custody, and administration of the goods, spiritual and temporal, of the said monastery you are so remiss, so negligent, so prodigal, that whereas the said monastery was of old times founded and endowed by the pious devotion of illustrious princes, of famous memory, heretofore kings of this land, the most noble progenitors of our most serene Lord and King that now is, in order that true religion might flourish there, that the name of the Most High, in whose honor and glory it was instituted, might be duly celebrated there;

And whereas, in days heretofore, the regular observance of the said rule was greatly regarded, and hospitality was diligently kept;

Nevertheless, for no little time, during which you have presided in the same monastery, you and certain of your fellow-monks and brethren (whose blood, it is feared, through your neglect, a severe Judge will require at your hand) have relaxed the measure and form of religious life; you have laid aside the pleasant yoke of contemplation, and all regular observances—hospitality, alms, and those other offices of piety which of old time were exercised and ministered therein have decreased, and by your faults, your carelessness, your neglect and deed, do daily decrease more and more, and cease to be regarded—the pious vows of the founders are defrauded of their just intent—the ancient rule of your order is deserted; and not a few of your fellow-monks and brethren, as we most deeply grieve to learn, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, laying aside the fear of God, do lead only a life of lasciviousness—nay, as is horrible to relate, be not afraid to defile the holy places, even the very churches of God, by infamous intercourse with nuns, &c. &c.

You yourself, moreover, among other grave enormities and abominable crimes whereof you are guilty, and for which you are noted and diffamed, have, in the first place, admitted a certain married woman, named Elena Germyn, who has separated herself without just cause from her husband, and for some time past has lived in adultery with another man, to be a nun or sister in the house or Priory of Bray, lying, as you pretend, within your jurisdiction. You have next appointed the same woman to be prioress of the said house, notwithstanding that her said husband was living at the time, and is still alive. And finally, Father Thomas Sudbury, one of your brother monks, publicly, notoriously, and without

interference or punishment from you, has associated, and still associates with this woman as an adulterer with his harlot.

Moreover, divers other of your brethren and fellow-monks have resorted, and do resort, continually to her and other women at the same place, as to a public brothel or receiving house, and have received no correction therefor.

Nor is Bray the only house into which you have introduced disorder. At the nunnery of Sapwell, which you also contend to be under your jurisdiction, you change the prioresses and superiors again and again at your own will and caprice. Here, as well as at Bray, you depose those who are good and religious; you promote to the highest dignities the worthless and the vicious. The duties of the order are cast aside; virtue is neglected; and by these means so much cost and extravagance has been caused, that to provide means for your indulgence you have introduced certain of your brethren to preside in their houses under the name of guardians, when in fact they are no guardians, but thieves and notorious villains; and with their help you have caused and permitted the goods of the same priories to be dispensed, or to speak more truly to be dissipated, in the above-described corruptions and other enormous and accursed offences. Those places once religious are rendered and reputed as it were profane and impious; and by your own and your creatures' conduct, are so impoverished as to be reduced to the verge of ruin.

In like manner, also, you have dealt with certain other cells of monks which you say are subject to you, even within the monastery of the glorious proto-martyr Alban himself. You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks, and other forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honor and promotion, and desirous therefore of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St. Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred. . . . You . . .



But we need not transcribe further this overwhelming document. It pursues its way through mire and filth to its most lame and impotent conclusion. After all this, the Abbot was not deposed; he was invited merely to reconsider his doings, and, if possible, amend them. Such was Church discipline, even under an extraordinary commission from Rome. But the most incorrigible Anglican will scarcely question the truth of a picture drawn by such a hand; and it must be added that this one unexceptional indictment lends at once assured credibility to the reports which were presented fifty years later, on the general visitation. There is no longer room for the presumptive objection that charges so revolting could not be true. We see that in their worst form they could be true, and the evidence of Legh and Leghton, of Rice and Bedyll, as it remains in their letters to Cromwell, must be shaken in detail, or else it must be accepted as correct. We cannot dream that Archbishop Morton was mistaken, or was misled by false information. St. Albans was no obscure priory in a remote and thinly-peopled country. The Abbot of St. Albans was a peer of the realm, taking precedence of bishops, living in the full glare of notoriety, within a few miles of London. The Archbishop had ample means of ascertaining the truth; and, we may be sure, had taken care to examine his ground before he left on record so tremendous an accusation. This story is true—as true as it is piteous. We will pause a moment over it before we pass from this, once more to ask our passionate Church friends whether still they will persist that the abbeys were no worse under the Tudors than they had been in their origin, under the Saxony, or under the first Norman and Plantagenet kings. We refuse to believe it. The abbeys which towered in the midst of the English towns, the houses clustered at their feet like subjects round some majestic queen, were

images indeed of the civil supremacy which the Church of the Middle Ages had asserted for itself; but they were images also of an inner spiritual sublimity, which had won the homage of grateful and admiring nations. The heavenly graces had once descended upon the monastic orders, making them ministers of mercy, patterns of celestial life, breathing witnesses of the power of the Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the heart. And then it was that art and wealth and genius poured out their treasures to raise fitting tabernacles for the dwelling of so divine a soul. Alike in the village and the city, amongst the unadorned walls and the lowly roofs which closed in the humble dwellings of the laity, the majestic houses of the Father of mankind and of his especial servants rose up in sovereign beauty. And ever at the sacred gates sat Mercy, pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and the suffering; ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenwards in intercession for the sins of mankind; and such blessed influences were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts, that even the poor outcasts of society, —the debtor, the felon, and the outlaw—gathered around the walls as the sick men sought the shadow, of the apostles, and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand, till their sins were washed from off their souls. The abbeys of the middle ages floated through the storms of war and conquest, like the ark upon the waves of the flood, in the midst of violence remaining inviolate, through awful reverence which surrounded them. The abbeys, as Henry's visitors found them, were as little like what they once had been, as the living man in the pride of his growth is like the corpse which the earth makes haste to hide forever.

The official letters which reveal the condition into which the monastic establishments had

degenerated, are chiefly in the Cotton Library, and a large number of them have been published by the Camden Society. Besides these, however, there are in the Rolls House many other documents which confirm and complete the statements of the writers of those letters. There is a part of what seems to have been a digest of the 'Black Book'—an epitome of iniquities, under the title of the 'Compendium Compertorum.' There are also reports from private persons, private entreaties for inquiry, depositions of monks in official examinations, and other similar papers, which, in many instances, are too offensive to be produced, and may rest in obscurity, unless contentious persons compel us to bring them forward. Some of these, however, throw curious light on the habits of the time, and on the collateral disorders which accompanied the more gross enormities. They show us, too, that although the dark tints predominate, the picture was not wholly black; that as just Lot was in the midst of Sodom, yet was unable by his signal presence to save the guilty city from destruction, so in the latest era of monasticism there were types yet lingering of an older and fairer age, who, nevertheless, were not delivered, like the patriarch, but perished most of them with the institution to which they belonged. The hideous exposure is not untinted with fairer lines; and we see traits here and there of true devotion, mistaken but heroic.

Of these documents, two specimens shall be given in this place, one of either kind; and both, so far as we know, new to modern history. The first is so singular, that we print it as it is found.—a genuine antique, fished up, in perfect preservation, out of the wreck of the old world.

About eight miles from Ludlow, in the county of Herefordshire, once stood the Abbey of Wigmore. There was Wigmore Castle a stronghold of the Welsh Marches, now, we

believe, a modern, well conditioned mansion ; and Wigmore Abbey, of which we do not hear that there are any remaining traces. Though now vanished, however, like so many of its kind, the house was three hundred years ago in vigorous existence ; and when the stir commenced for an inquiry, the proceedings of the Abbot of this place gave occasion to a memorial which stands in the Rolls collection as follows : \*—

Articles to be objected against John Smart, Abbot of the Monastery of Wigmore, in the county of Hereford, to be exhibited to the Right Honorable Lord Thomas Cromwell, the Lord Privy Seal and Vicegerent to the King's Majesty.

1. The said abbot is to be accused of simony, as well for taking money for advocacy and putations of benefices, as for giving of orders, or more truly, selling them, and that to such persons which have been rejected elsewhere, and of little learning and light consideration.

2. The said abbot hath promoted to orders many scholars when all other bishops did refrain to give such orders on account of certain ordinances devised by the King's Majesty and his Council for the common weal of this realm. Then resorted to the said abbot scholars out of all parts, whom he would promote to orders by sixty at a time, and sometimes more, and otherwhiles less. And sometimes the said abbot would give orders by night within his chamber, and otherwise in the church early in the morning, and now and then at a chapel out of the abbey. So that there be many unlearned and light priests made by the said abbot, and in the diocese of Llandaff, and in the places aforementioned—a thousand, as it is esteemed, by the space of this seven years he hath made priests, and received not so little money of them as a thousand pounds for their orders.

3. Item, that the said abbot now of late, when he could not be suffered to give general orders, for the most part doth give orders by pretence of dispensation ; and by that color he promoteth them to orders by two and three, and takes much money of them, both for their orders and for to purchase their dispensations after the time he hath promoted them to their orders.

4. Item, the said abbot hath hurt and dismayed his tenants by putting them from their leases, and by enclosing their commons from them, and selling and utter wasting of the woods that were wont to relieve and succor them.

\* Rolls House MS., *Miscellaneous Papers*, First Series, 356.



5. Item, the said abbot hath sold corradyes, to the damage of the said monastery.

6. Item, the said abbot hath alienated and sold the jewels and plate of the monastery, to the value of five hundred marks, *to purchase of the Bishop of Rome his bulls to be a bishop, and to annex the said abbey to his bishopric, to that intent that he should not for his misdeeds be punished, or deprived from his said abbey.*

7. Item, that the said abbot, long after that other bishops had renounced the Bishop of Rome, and professed them to the King's Majesty, did use, but more verily usurped, the office of a bishop by virtue of his first bulls purchased from Rome, till now of late, as it will appear by the date of his confirmation, if he have any.

8. Item, that he the said abbot hath lived viciously, and kept to concubines divers and many women that is openly known.

9. Item, that the said abbot doth yet continue his vicious living, as it is known, openly.

10. Item, that the said abbot hath spent and wasted much of the goods of the said monastery upon the afore-said women.

11. Item, that the said abbot is malicious and very wrathful, not regarding what he saith or doeth in his fury or anger.

12. Item, that one Richard Gyles bought of the abbot and convent of Wigmore a corradye, and a chamber for him and his wife for term of their lives; and when the said Richard Gyles was aged and was very weak, he disposed his goods, and made executors to execute his will. And when the said abbot now being—perceived that the said Richard Gyles was rich, and had not bequeathed so much of his goods to him as he would have had, the said abbot then came to the chamber of the said Richard Gyles, and put out thence all his friends and kinsfolk that kept him in his sickness; and then the said abbot set his brother and other of his servants to keep the sick man; and the night next coming after the said Richard Gyles's coffer was broken, and thence taken all that was in the same, to the value of forty marks; and long after the said abbot confessed, before the executors of the said Richard Gyles, that it was his deed.

13. Item, that the said abbot, after he had taken away the goods of the said Richard Gyles, used daily to reprove and check the said Richard Gyles, and inquire of him where was more of his coin and money; and at the last the said abbot thought he lived too long, and made the sick man, after much sorry keeping, to be taken from his feather-bed, and laid upon a cold mattress, and kept his friends from him to his death.

15. Item, that the said abbot consented to the death and murdering of one John Tichkill, that was slain at his procuring, at the said monastery, by Sir Richard Cubley, canon and chaplain to the said abbot; which

canon is and ever hath been since that time chief of the said abbot's council ; and is supported to carry cross-bowes, and to go whither he lusteth at any time, to fishing and hunting in the king's forests, parks, and chases ; but little or nothing serving the quire, as other brethren do, neither corrected of the abbot for any trespass he doth commit.

16. Item, that the said abbot hath been perjured oft, as is to be proved and is proved ; and as it is supposed, did not make a true inventory of the goods, chattels, and jewels of his monastery to the King's Majesty and his Council.

17. Item, that the said abbot hath infringed all the king's injunctions which were given him by Doctor Cave to observe and keep ; and when he was denounced *in pleno capitulo* to have broken the same, he would have put in prison the brother as did denounce him to have broken the same injunctions, save that he was let by the convent there.

18. Item, that the said abbot hath openly preached against the doctrine of Christ, saying he ought not to love his enemy, but as he loves the devil ; and that he should love his enemy's soul, but not his body.

19. Item, that the said abbot hath taken but small regard to the good-living of his household.

20. Item that the said abbot hath had and hath yet a special favor to misdores and manquellers, thieves, deceivers of their neighbors, and by them [is] most ruled and counselled.

21. Item, that the said abbot hath granted leases of farms and advocations first to one man, and took his fine, and also hath granted the same lease to another man for more money ; and then would make to the last taker a lease or writing, with an antedate of the first lease, which had bred great dissension among gentlemen—as Master Blunt and Master Moysey, and other takers of such leases—and that often.

22. Item, the said abbot having the contrepaynes of leases in his keeping, hath, for money, rased out the number of years mentioned in the said leases. and writ a fresh number in the former taker's lease, and in the contrepayne thereof, to the intent to defraud the taker ortbuyer of the residence of such leases of whom he hath received the money.

23. Item, the said abbot hath, not according to the foundation of his monastery, admitted reely tenants into certain alms-houses belonging to the said monastery ; but of them he hath taken large fines, and some of them he hath put away that would not give him fines ; whither poor, aged, and impotent people were wont to be freely admitted, and [to] receive the founder's alms that of the old customs [were] limited to the same—which alms is also diminished by the said abbot.

24. Item, that the said abbot did not deliver the bulls

of his bishopric, that he purchased from Rome, to our sovereign lord the king's council till long after the time he had delivered and exhibited the bulls of his monastery to them.

25. Item, that the said abbot hath detained and yet doth detain servants' wages; and often when the said servants hath asked their wages, the said abbot hath put them into the stocks, and beat them.

26. Item, the said abbot, in times past, hath had a great devotion to ride to Llangarvan, in Wales, upon Lammas-day, to receive pardon there; and on the even he would visit one Mary Hawle, an old acquaintance of his, at the Welsh Poole, and on the morrow ride to the foresaid Llangarvan, to be confessed and absolved, and the same night return to company with the said Mary Hawle, at the Welsh Poole aforesaid, and Kateryn, the said Mary Hawle her first daughter, whom the said abbot long hath kept to concubine, and had children by her, that he lately married at Ludlow. And [there be] others that have been taken out of his chamber and put in the stocks within the said abbey, and others that have complained upon him to the king's council of the Marches of Wales; and the woman that dashed out his teeth, that he would have had by violence, I will not name now, nor other men's wives, lest it would offend your good lordship to read or hear the same.

27. Item, the said abbot doth daily embezzle, sell, and convey the goods and chattels, and jewels of the said monastery, having no need so to do; for is thought that he hath a thousand marks or two thousand lying by him that he hath gotten by selling of orders, and the jewels and plate of the monastery and corradyes; and it is to be feared that he will alienate all the rest, unless your good lordship speedily make redress and provision to let the same.

28. Item, the said abbot was accustomed yearly to preach at Leyntwarded on the Festival of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, where and when the people were wont to offer to an image there, and to the same the said abbot in his sermons would exhort them and encourage them. But now the oblations be decayed, the abbot, espying the image then to have a cote of silver plate and gilt, hath taken away of his own authority the said image, and the plate turned to his own use; and left his preaching there, saying it is no manner of profit to any man, and the plate that was about the said image was named to be worth forty pounds.

29. Item, the said abbot hath ever nourished enmity and discord among his brethren; and hath not encouraged them to learn the laws and the mystery of Christ. But he that least knew was most cherished by him; and he hath been highly displeased and [hath] disdained when his brothers would say that 'it is God's precept and doctrine that ye ought to prefer before your ceremonies

and vain constitutions.' This saying was high disobedient, and should be grievously punished; when that lying, obloquy, flattery, ignorance, derision, contumely, discord, great swearing, drinking, hypocrisy, fraud, superstition, deceit, conspiracy to wrong their neighbor, and other of that kind, was had in special favor and regard. Laud and praise be to God that hath sent us the true knowledge. Honor and long prosperity to our sovereign lord and his noble council, that teaches to advance the same. Amen.

By John Lee, your faithful bedeman, and canon of the said monastery of Wigmore.

Postscript.—My good lord, there is in the said abbey a cross of fine gold and precious stones, whereof one diamond was esteemed by Doctor Booth, Bishop of Hereford, worth a hundred marks. In that cross is enclosed a piece of wood, named to be of the cross that Christ died upon, and to the same hath been offering. And when it should be brought down to the church from the treasury, it was brought down with lights, and like reverence as should have been done to Christ Himself. I fear lest the abbot upon Sunday next, when he may enter the treasury, will take away the said cross and break it, or turn to his own use, with many other precious jewels that be there.

All these articles afore written be true as to the substance and true meaning of them, though peradventure for haste and lack of counsel, some words be set amiss or out of their place. That I will be ready to prove forasmuch as lies in me, when it shall like your honorable lordship to direct your commission to men (or any man) that will be indifferent and not corrupt to sit upon the same, at the said abbey, where the witnesses and proofs be most ready and the truth is best known, or at any other place where it shall be thought most convenient by your high discretion and authority.

The statutes of Provisors, commonly called *Præmunire* statutes, which forbade all purchases of bulls from Rome under penalty of outlawry, have been usually considered in the highest degree oppressive; and more particularly the public censure has fallen upon the last application of those statutes, when on Wolsey's fall, the whole body of the clergy were laid under a *præmunire*, and only obtained pardon on payment of a serious fine. Let no one regret that he has learnt to be tolerant to Roman Catholics as the nineteenth century knows them. But it is a spurious charity which,



to remedy a modern injustice, hastens to its opposite ; and when philosophic historians indulge in loose invective against the statesmen of the Reformation, they show themselves unfit to be trusted with the custody of our national annals. The Acts of Parliament speak plainly of the enormous abuses which had grown up under these bulls. Yet even the emphatic language of the statutes scarcely prepares us to find an abbot able to purchase with jewels stolen from his own convent a faculty to confer holy orders, though there is no evidence that he had been consecrated bishop, and to make a thousand pounds by selling the exercise of his privileges. This is the most flagrant case which has fallen under the eyes of the present writer. Yet it is but a choice specimen out of many. He was taught to believe, like other modern students of history, that the papal dispensations for immorality, of which we read in Foxe and other Protestant writers, were calumnies, but he has been forced against his will to perceive that the supposed calumnies were but the plain truth ; he has found among the records—for one thing, a list of more than twenty clergy in one diocese who had obtained licences to keep concubines.\* After some experience, he advises all persons who are anxious to understand the English Reformation to place implicit confidence in the Statute Book. Every fresh record which is brought to light is a fresh evidence in its favor. In the fluctuations of the conflict there were parliaments, as there were princes, of opposing sentiments ; and measures were passed, amended, repealed, or censured, as Protestants and Catholics came alternately into power. But whatever were the differences of opinion, the facts on either side which are stated in an Act of Parliament may be uniformly trusted. Even in the attainders for treason and heresy we admire the truthfulness of the details of the indictments although

\* Tanner MS. 105, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

we deplore the prejudice which at times could make a crime of virtue.

We pass on to the next picture. Equal justice, or some attempt at it, was promised, and we shall perhaps part from the friends of the monasteries on better terms than they believe. At least, we shall add to our own history and to the Catholic martyrology a story of genuine interest.

We have many accounts of the abbeys at the time of their actual dissolution. The resistance or acquiescence of superiors, the dismissals of the brethren, the sale of the property, the destruction of relics, etc., are all described. We know how the windows were taken out, how the glass appropriated, how the 'melter' accompanied the visitors to run the lead upon the roofs, and the metal of the bells, into portable forms. We see the pensioned regulars filing out reluctantly, or exulting in their deliverance, discharged from their vows, furnished each with his 'secular apparel,' and his purse of money, to begin the world as he might. These scenes have long been partially known, and they were rarely attended with anything remarkable. At the time of the suppression, the discipline of several years had broken down opposition, and prepared the way for the catastrophe. The end came at last, but as an issue which had been long foreseen.

We have sought in vain, however, for a glimpse into the interior of the houses at the first intimation of what was coming—more especially when the great blow was struck which severed England from obedience to Rome, and asserted the independence of the Anglican Church. Then, virtually, the fate of the monasteries was decided. As soon as the supremacy was vested in the Crown, inquiry into their condition could no longer be escaped or delayed; and then, through the length and breadth of the country, there must have been rare dismay. The account of the London Car-

thusians is indeed known to us, because they chose to die rather than yield submission where their consciences forbade them; and their insolated heroism has served to distinguish their memories. The Pope, as head of the Universal Church, claimed the power of absolving subjects from their allegiance to their king. He deposed Henry. He called on foreign princes to enforce his sentence; and, on pain of excommunication, commanded the native English to rise in rebellion. The king, in self-defence, was compelled to require his subjects to disclaim all sympathy with these pretensions, and to recognize no higher authority, spiritual or secular, than himself within his own dominions. The regular clergy throughout the country were on the Pope's side, secretly or openly. The Charter-house monks, however, alone of all the order, had the courage to declare their convictions, and to suffer for them. Of the rest, we only perceive that they at last submitted; and since there was no uncertainty as to their real feelings, we have been disposed to judge them hardly as cowards. Yet we who have never been tried, should perhaps be cautious in our censures. It is possible to hold an opinion quite honestly, and yet to hesitate about dying for it. We consider ourselves, at the present day, persuaded honestly of many things; yet which of them should we refuse to relinquish if the scaffold were the alternative—or at least seemed to relinquish, under silent protest?

And yet, in the details of the struggle at the Charter-house, we see the forms of mental trial which must have repeated themselves among all bodies of the clergy wherever there was seriousness of conviction. If the majority of the monks were vicious and sensual, there was still a large minority laboring to be true to their vows; and when one entire convent was capable of sustained resistance, there must have been many where there was only just too little

virtue for the emergency—where the conflict between interest and conscience was equally genuine, though it ended the other way. Scenes of bitter misery there must have been—of passionate emotion wrestling ineffectually with the iron resolution of the Government : and the faults of the Catholic party weigh so heavily against them in the course and progress of the Reformation, that we cannot willingly lose the few countervailing tints which soften the darkness of their conditions.

Nevertheless, for any authentic account of the abbeys at this crisis, we have hitherto been left to our imagination. A stern and busy administration had little leisure to preserve records of sentimental struggles which led to nothing. The Catholics did not care to keep alive the recollection of a conflict in which, even though with difficulty, the Church was defeated. A rare accident only could have brought down to us any fragment of a transaction which no one had an interest in remembering. That such an accident has really occurred, we may consider as unusually fortunate. The story in question concerns the abbey of Woburn, and is as follows :—

At Woburn, as in many other religious houses, there were representatives of both the factions which divided the country ; perhaps we should say of three—the sincere Catholics, the Indifferentists, and the Protestants. These last, so long as Wolsey was in power, had been frightened into silence, and with difficulty had been able to save themselves from extreme penalties. No sooner, however, had Wolsey fallen, and the battle commenced with the Papacy, than the tables turned, the persecuted became persecutors—or at least threw off their disguise—and were strengthened with the support of the large class who cared only of keep on the winning side. The mysteries of the faith came to be disputed at the public tables ; the refectories rang with polemics ;



the sacred silence of the dormitories was broken for the first time by lawless speculation. The orthodox might have appealed to the Government: heresy was still forbidden by law, and, if detected, was still punished by the stake. But the orthodox among the regular clergy adhered to the Pope as well as to the faith, and abhorred the sacrilege of the Parliament as deeply as the new opinions of the Reformers. Instead of calling in the help of the law, they muttered treason in secret; and the Reformers, confident in the necessities of the times, sent reports to London of their arguments and conversations. The authorities in the abbey were accused of disaffection; and a commission of inquiry was sent down towards the end of the spring of 1536, to investigate. The depositions taken on this occasion are still preserved; and with the help of them, we can leap over three centuries of time, and hear the last echoes of the old monastic life in Woburn Abbey dying away in discord.

Where party feeling was running so high, there were, of course, passionate arguments. The Act of Supremacy, the spread of Protestantism, the power of the Pope, the state of England—all were discussed; and the possibilities of the future, as each party painted it in the colors of his hopes. The brethren, we find, spoke their minds in plain language, sometimes condescending to a joke.

Brother Sherbourne deposes that the sub-prior, 'on Candlemas-day last past (February 2, 1536), asked him whether he longed not to be at Rome where all his bulls were?' Brother Sherbourne answered that 'his bulls had made so many calves, that he had burned them. Whereunto the sub-prior said he thought there were more calves now than there were then.'

Then there were long and furious quarrels about 'my Lord Privy Seal' (Cromwell)—who was to one party, the incarnation of Satan; to the other, the delivering angel.

Nor did matters mend when from the minister they passed to the master.

Dan John Croxton being in 'the shaving-house' one day with certain of the brethren having their tonsures looked to, and gossiping as men do on such occasions, one 'Friar Lawrence did say that the king was dead.' Then said Croxton, 'Thanks be to God, his Grace is in good health, and I pray God so continue him;' and said further to the said Lawrence, 'I advise thee to leave thy babbling.' Croxton it seems, had been among the suspected in earlier times. Lawrence said to him, 'Croxton, it maketh no matter what thou sayest, for thou art one of the new world;' whereupon hotter still the conversation proceeded. 'Thy babbling tongue,' Croxton said, 'will turn us all to displeasure at length.' 'Then, quoth Lawrence, 'neither thou nor yet any of us all shall do well as long as we forsake our head of the Church, the Pope.' 'By the mass!' quoth Croxton, 'I would thy Pope Roger were in thy belly, or thou in his, for thou art a false perjured knave to thy prince.' Whereunto the said Lawrence answered, saying, 'By the mass, thou liest! I was never sworn to forsake the Pope to be our head, and never will be.' 'Then,' quoth Croxton, 'thou shalt be sworn spite of thine heart one day, or I will know why nay.'

These and similar wranglings may be taken as specimens of the daily conversation at Woburn, and we can perceive how an abbot with the best intentions would have found it difficult to keep the peace. There are instances of superiors in other houses throwing down their command in the midst of the crisis in flat despair, protesting that their subject brethren were no longer governable. Abbots who were inclined to the Reformation could not manage the Catholics; Catholic abbots could not manage the Protestants; indifferent abbots could not manage either the one or the other. It would have been well for the Abbot of

Woburn—or well as far as this world is concerned—if he, like one of these, had acknowledged his incapacity, and had fled from his charge.

His name was Robert Hobbes. Of his age and family, history is silent. We know only that he held his place when the storm rose against the Pope ; that, like the rest of the clergy, he bent before the blast, taking the oath to the king, and submitting to the royal supremacy, but swearing under protest, as the phrase went, with the outward, and not with the inward man—in fact, perjuring himself. Though infirm, so far, however, he was too honest to be a successful counterfeit, and from the jealous eyes of the Neologians of the abbey he could not conceal his tendencies. We have significant evidence of the *espionage* which was established over all suspected quarters, in the conversations and trifling details of conduct on the part of the Abbot, which were reported to the Government.

In the summer of 1534, orders come that the Pope's name should be rased out wherever it was mentioned in the mass books. A malcontent, by name Robert Salford, deposed that ' he was singing mass before the Abbot at St Thomas's altar within the monastery, at which time he rased out with his knife the said name out of the canon.' The Abbot told him to ' take a pen and strike or cross him out,' The saucy monk said those were not the orders. They were to rase him out. ' Well, well,' the Abbot said, ' it will come again one day.' ' Come again will it ? ' was the answer ; ' if it do, then we will put him in again ; but I trust I shall never see that day.' The mild Abbot could remonstrate, but could not any more command ; and the proofs of his malignant inclinations were remembered against him for the ear of Cromwell.

In the general injunctions, too, he was directed to preach against the Pope, and to expose his usurpation ; but he could not bring himself to obey. He shrank from the pulpit ;

he preached but twice after the visitation, and then on other subjects, while in the prayer before the sermon he refused, as we find, to use the prescribed form. He only said, 'You shall pray for the spirituality, the temporality, and the souls that be in the pains of purgatory; and did not name the king to be supreme head of the Church in neither of the said sermons, nor speak against the pretended authority of the Bishop of Rome.'

Again, when Paul the Third, shortly after his election, proposed to call a general council at Mantua, against which, by advice of Henry the Eighth, the Germans protested, we have a glimpse how eagerly anxious English eyes were watching for a turning tide. 'Hear you,' said the Abbot one day, 'of the Pope's holiness and the congregation of bishops, abbots, and princes gathered to the council at Mantua? They be gathered for the reformation of the Universal Church; and here now we have a book of the excuse of the Germans, by which we may know what heretics they be: for if they were Catholics and true men as they pretend to be, they would never have refused to come to a general council.'

So matters went with the Abbot for some months after he had sworn obedience to the king. Lulling his conscience with such opiates as the casuists could provide for him, he watched anxiously for a change, and labored with but little reserve to hold his brethren to their old allegiance.

In the summer of 1535, however, a change came over the scene, very different from the outward reaction for which he was looking, and a better mind woke in the Abbot: he learnt that in swearing what he did not mean with reservations and nice distinctions, he had lied to heaven and lied to man: that to save his miserable life he had perilled his soul. When the Oath of Supremacy was required of the nation, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the



monks of the Charter-house—mistaken, as we believe, in judgment, but true to their consciences, and disdaining evasion or subterfuge—chose, with deliberate nobleness, rather to die than to perjure themselves. This is no place to enter on the great question of the justice or necessity of those executions ; but the story of the so-called martyrdoms convulsed the Catholic world. The Pope shook upon his throne ; the shuttle of diplomatic intrigue stood still ; diplomatists who had lived so long in lies that the whole life of man seemed but a stage pageant, a thing of show and tinsel, stood aghast at the revelation of English sincerity, and a shudder of great awe ran through Europe. The fury of party leaves little room for generous emotion, and no pity was felt for these men by the English Protestants. The Protestants knew well that if these same sufferers could have had their way, they would themselves have been sacrificed by hecatombs ; and as they had never experienced mercy, so they were in turn without mercy. But to the English Catholics, who believed as Fisher believed, but who had not dared to suffer as Fisher suffered, his death and the death of the rest acted as a glimpse of the Judgment Day. Their safety became their shame and terror ; and in the radiant example before them of true faithfulness, they saw their own falsehood and their own disgrace. So it was with Father Forest, who had taught his penitents in confession that they might perjure themselves, and who now sought a cruel death in voluntary expiation ; so it was with Whiting, the Abbot of Glastonbury ; so with others whose names should be should be more familiar to us than they are ; and here in Woburn we are to see the feeble but genuine penitence of Abbot Hobbes. He was still unequal to immediate martyrdom, but he did what he knew might drag his death upon him if disclosed to the Government, and sur-

rounded by spies he could have had no hope of concealment.

‘At the time,’ deposed Robert Salford, ‘that the monks of the Charter-house, with other traitors, did suffer death, the Abbot did call us into the Chapter-house, and said these words : —“ Brethren, this is a perilous time ; such a scourge was never heard since Christ’s passion. Ye hear how good men suffer the death. Brethren, this is undoubted for our offences. Ye read ; so long as the children of Israel kept the commandments of God, so long their enemies had no power over them, but God took vengeance of their enemies. But when they broke God’s commandments, then they were subdued by their enemies, and so be we. Therefore let us be sorry for our offences. Undoubted he will take vengeance of our enemies ; I mean those heretics that causeth so many good men to suffer thus. Alas, it is a piteous case that so much Christian blood should be shed. Therefore, good brethren, for the reverence of God, every one of you devoutly pray, and say this Psalm, ‘O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance ; thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the field. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem, and there was no man to bury them. We are become an open scorn unto our enemies, a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us. Oh, remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon, for we are come to great misery. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name. Oh, be merciful unto our sins for thy name’s sake. Wherefore do the heathen say, Where is now their God ?’ Ye shall say this Psalm,” repeated the Abbot, “every Friday, after the litany, prostrate, when ye lie

upon the high altar, and undoubtedly God will cease this extreme scourge." And so, continues Salford, significantly, 'the convent did say this aforesaid Psalm until there were certain that did murmur at the saying of it, and so it was left.'

The Abbot, it seems, either stood alone, or found but languid support: even his own familiar friends whom he trusted, those with whom he had walked in the house of God, had turned against him; the harsh air of the dawn of a new world choked him: what was there for him but to die? But his conscience still haunted him: while he lived he must fight on, and so, if possible, find pardon for his perjury. The blows in those years fell upon the Church thick and fast. In February, 1536, the Bill passed for the dissolution of the smaller monasteries; and now we find the sub-prior with the whole fraternity united in hostility, and the Abbot without one friend remaining.

'He did again call us together,' says the next deposition, 'and lamentably mourning for the dissolving the said houses, he enjoined us to sing *'Salvator mundi, salva nos omnes,'* every day after lauds; and we murmured at it and were not content to sing it for such cause; and so we did omit it divers days, for which the Abbot came unto the Chapter, and did in manner rebuke us, and said we were bound to obey his commandment by our profession, and so did command us to sing it again with the versicle "*Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him.*" Also he enjoined us at every mass that every priest did sing, to say the collect, "*O God, who despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart.*" And he said if we did this with good and true devotion, God would so handle the matter, that it should be to the comfort of all England, and so show us mercy as he showed unto the children of Israel. And surely, brethren, there will come to us a

good man that will rectify these monasteries again that be now suppress, because "God can of these stones raise up children to Abraham."'

'Of the stones,' perhaps, but less easily of the stony-hearted monks, who, with pitiless smiles, watched the Abbot's sorrow, which should soon bring him to his ruin.

Time passed on, and as the world grew worse, so the Abbot grew more lonely. Desolate and unsupported, he was still unable to make up his mind to the course which he knew to be right; but he slowly strengthened himself for the trial, and as Lent came on the season brought with it a more special call to effort; he did not fail to recognize it. The conduct of the fraternity sorely disturbed him. They preached against all which he most loved and valued, in language purposely coarse; and the mild sweetness of the rebukes which he administered, showed plainly on which side lay, in the Abbey of Woburn, the larger portion of the spirit of Heaven. Now when the passions of those times have died away, and we can look back with more indifferent eyes, how touching is the following scene. There was one Sir William, curate of Woburn Chapel, whose tongue, it seems, was rough beyond the rest. The Abbot met him one day, and spoke to him. 'Sir William,' he said, 'I hear tell ye be a great railer. I marvel that ye rail so. I pray you teach my cure the Scripture of God, and that may be to edification. I pray you leave such railing. Ye call the Pope a bear and a band-dog. Either he is a good man or an ill. *Domino suo stat aut cadit*. The office of a bishop is honorable. What edifying is this to rail? Let him alone.'

But they would not let him alone, nor would they let the Abbot alone. He grew 'somewhat acrased,' they said; vexed with feelings of which they had no experience. He fell sick, sorrow and the Lent discipline weighing upon him. The brethren went to see him in his room; one Brother Dan Woburn came among the rest,



and asked him how he did; the Abbot answered, 'I would that I had died with the good man that died for holding with the Pope. My conscience, my conscience doth grudge me every day for it.' Life was fast losing its value for him. What was life to him or any man when bought with a sin against his soul? 'If the Abbot be disposed to die, for that matter,' Brother Croxton observed, 'he may die as soon as he will.'

All Lent he fasted and prayed, and his illness grew upon him; and at length in Passion week he thought all was over, and that he was going away. On Passion Sunday he called the brethren about him, and as they stood round his bed, with their cold hard eyes, 'he exhorted them all to charity,' he implored them 'never to consent to go out of their monastery; and if it chanced them to be put from it, they should in no wise forsake their habit.' After these words, being in a great agony, he rose out of his bed, and cried out and said, "I would to God, it would please Him to take me out of this wretched world; and I would I had died with the good men that have suffered death heretofore, for they were quickly out of their pain." \* Then, half wandering, he began to mutter to himself aloud the thoughts which had been working in him in his struggles; and quoting St. Bernard's words about the Pope, he exclaimed, '*Tu quis es primatu Abel, gubernatione Noah, auctoritate Moses, judicatu Samuel, potestate Petrus, unctione Christus. Aliæ ecclesiæ habent super se pastores. Tu pastor pastorum es.*'

Let it be remembered that this is no sentimental fiction begotten out of the brain of some ingenious novelist, but the record of the true words and sufferings of a genuine child of Adam, laboring in a trial too hard for him.

He prayed to die, and in good time death was to come to him; but not, after all, in the

\* Meaning, as he afterwards said, More and Fisher and the Carthusians.

sick bed, with his expiation but half completed. A year before, he had thrown down the cross when it was offered him. He was to take it again—the very cross which he had refused. He recovered. He was brought before the council ; with what result, there are no means of knowing. To admit the Papal supremacy when officially questioned was high treason. Whether the Abbot was constant, and received some conditional pardon, or whether his heart again for the moment failed him—whichever he did, the records are silent. This only we ascertain of him ; that he was not put to death under the Statute of Supremacy. But, two years later, when the official list was presented to the Parliament of those who had suffered for their share in ‘ the Pilgrimage of Grace,’ among the rest we find the name of Robert Hobbes, late Abbot of Woburn. To this solitary fact we can add nothing. The rebellion was put down, and in the punishment of the offenders there was unusual leniency ; not more than thirty persons were executed, although forty thousand had been in arms. Those only were selected who had been most signally implicated. But they were all leaders in the movement ; the men of highest rank, and therefore greatest guilt. They died for what they believed their duty ; and the king and council did their duty in enforcing the laws against armed insurgents. He for whose cause each supposed themselves to be contending, has long since judged between them ; and both parties perhaps now see all things with clearer eyes than was permitted to them on earth.

We also can see more distinctly. We will not refuse the Abbot Hobbes a brief record of his trial and passion. And although twelve generations of Russells—all loyal to the Protestant ascendancy—have swept Woburn clear of Catholic associations, they, too, in these later days, will not regret to see revived the authentic story of its last Abbot.

## ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN WORTHIES.\*

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THE Reformation, the Antipodes, the American Continent, the Planetary system, and the infinite deep of the Heaven, have now become common and familiar facts to us. Globes and orreries are the playthings of our school-days ; we inhale the spirit of Protestantism with our earliest breath of consciousness. It is all but impossible to throw back our imagination into the time when, as new grand discoveries, they stirred every mind which they touched with awe and wonder at the revelation which God had sent down among mankind. Vast spiritual and material continents lay for the first time displayed, opening fields of thought and fields of enterprise of which none could conjecture the limit. Old routine was broken up. Men were thrown back on their own strength and their own power, unshackled to accomplish whatever they might dare. And although we do not speak of these discoveries as the cause of that enormous force of heart and intellect which accompanied them (for they were as much the effect as the cause, and one reacted on the other), yet at any rate they afforded scope and room for the play of powers which, without such scope, let them have been as transcendent as they would, must have passed away unproductive and blighted.

An earnest faith in the supernatural, an in-

\* *Westminster Review*, 1852.

tensely real conviction of the divine and devilish forces by which the universe was guided and misguided, was the inheritance of the Elizabethan age from Catholic Christianity. The fiercest and most lawless men did then really and truly believe in the actual personal presence of God or the devil in every accident, or scene, or action. They brought to the contemplation of the new heaven and the new earth an imagination saturated with the spiritual convictions of the old era, which were not lost, but only infinitely expanded. The planets, whose vastness they now learnt to recognize, were, therefore, only the more powerful for evil or for good ; the tides were the breathing of Demogorgon ; and the idolatrous American tribes were real worshippers of the real devil, and were assisted with the full power of his evil army.

It is a form of thought which, however in a vague and general way we may continue to use its phraseology, has become, in its detailed application to life, utterly strange to us. We congratulate ourselves on the enlargement of our understanding when we read the decisions of grave law courts in cases of supposed witchcraft ; we smile complacently over Raleigh's story of the island of the Amazons, and rejoice that we are not such as he—entangled in the cobwebs of effete and foolish superstition. Yet the true conclusion is less flattering to our vanity. That Raleigh and Bacon could believe what they believed, and could be what they were notwithstanding, is to us a proof that the injury which such mistakes can inflict is unspeakably insignificant ; and arising, as those mistakes arose, from a never-failing sense of the real awfulness and mystery of the world and of the life of human souls upon it, they witness to the presence in such minds of a spirit, the loss of which not the most perfect acquaintance with every law by which the whole creation moves can compensate. We



wonder at the grandeur, the moral majesty of some of Shakespeare's characters, so far beyond what the noblest among ourselves can imitate, and at first thought we attribute it to the genius of the poet, who has outstripped nature in his creations. But we are misunderstanding the power and the meaning of poetry in attributing creativeness to it in any such sense. Shakespeare created, but only as the spirit of nature created around him, working in him as it worked abroad in those among whom he lived. The men whom he draws were such men as he saw and knew; the words they utter were such as he heard in the ordinary conversations in which he joined. At the Mermaid with Raleigh and with Sidney, and at a thousand unnamed English firesides, he found the living originals for his Prince Hals, his Orlandos, his Antonios, his Portias, his Isabellas. The closer personal acquaintance which we can form with the English of the age of Elizabeth, the more we are satisfied that Shakespeare's great poetry is no more than the rhythmic echo of the life which it depicts.

It was, therefore, with no little interest that we heard of the formation of a society which was to employ itself, as we understood, in republishing in accessible form some, if not all, of the invaluable records compiled or composed by Richard Hakluyt. Books, like everything else, have their appointed death-day: the souls of them, unless they be found worthy of a second birth in a new body, perish with the paper in which they lived; and the early folio Hakluyts, not from their own want of merit, but from our neglect of them, were expiring of old age. The five-volume quarto edition, published in 1811, so little people then cared for the exploits of their ancestors, consisted but of 270 copies. It was intended for no more than for curious antiquaries, or for the great libraries, where it could be consulted as a book of reference; and among a people, the

greater part of whom had never heard Hakluyt's name, the editors are scarcely to be blamed if it never so much as occurred to them that general readers would care to have the book within their reach.

And yet those five volumes may be called the Prose Epic of the modern English nation. They contain the heroic tales of the exploits of the great men in whom the new era was inaugurated ; not mythic, like the *Iliads* and the *Eddas*, but plain broad narratives of substantial facts, which rival legend in interest, and grandeur.. What the old epics were to the royally or nobly born, this modern epic is to the common people. We have no longer kings or princes for chief actors, to whom the heroism like the dominion of the world had in time past been confined. But, as it was in the days of the Apostles, when a few poor fishermen from an obscure lake in Palestine assumed, under the Divine mission, the spiritual authority over mankind, so, in the days of our own Elizabeth, the seamen from the banks of the Thames and the Avon, the Plym and the Dart, self-taught and self-directed, with no impulse but what was beating in their own royal hearts, went out across the unknown seas fighting, discovering, colonizing, and graved out the channels, paving them at last with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England has flowed out over all the world. We can conceive nothing, not the songs of Homer himself, which would be read among us with more enthusiastic interest than these plain massive tales ; and a people's edition of them in these days, when the writings of Ainsworth and Eugène Sue circulate in tens of thousands, would perhaps be the most blessed antidote which could be bestowed upon us. The heroes themselves were the men of the people—the Joneses, the Smiths, the Davises, the Drakes ; and no courtly pen, with the one exception of Raleigh, lent its polish or its varnish to set them off. In

most cases the captain himself, or his clerk or servant, or some unknown gentleman volunteer, sat down and chronicled the voyage which he had shared; and thus inorganically arose a collection of writings which, with all their simplicity, are for nothing more striking than for the high moral beauty, warmed with natural feeling, which displays itself through all their pages. With us, the sailor is scarcely himself beyond his quarter-deck. If he is distinguished in his profession, he is professional merely; or if he is more than that, he owes it not to his work as a sailor, but to independent domestic culture. With them, their profession was the school of their nature, a high moral education which most brought out what was most nobly human in them; and the wonders of earth, and air, and sea, and sky, were a real intelligible language in which they heard Almighty God speaking to them.

That such hopes of what might be accomplished by the Hakluyt Society should in some measure be disappointed, is only what might naturally be anticipated of all very sanguine expectation. Cheap editions are expensive editions to the publisher; and historical societies, from a necessity which appears to encumber all corporate English action, rarely fail to do their work expensively and infelicitously. Yet, after all allowances and deductions, we cannot reconcile ourselves to the mortification of having found but one volume in the series to be even tolerable edited, and that one to be edited by a gentleman to whom England is but an adopted country—Sir Robert Schomburgk. Raleigh's 'Conquest of Guiana,' with Sir Robert's sketch of Raleigh's history and character, form in everything but its cost a very model of an excellent volume. For the remaining editors,\* we are obliged to say that they have exerted themselves successfully to para-

\* This essay was written 15 years ago.

lyze whatever interest was reviving in Hakluyt, and to consign their own volumes to the same obscurity to which time and accident were consigning the earlier editions. Very little which was really noteworthy escaped the industry of Hakluyt himself, and we looked to find reprints of the most remarkable of the stories which were to be found in his collection. The editors began unfortunately with proposing to continue the work where he had left it, and to produce narratives hitherto unpublished of other voyages of inferior interest, or not of English origin. Better thoughts appear to have occurred to them in the course of the work; but their evil destiny overtook them before their thoughts could get themselves executed. We opened one volume with eagerness, bearing the title of 'Voyage to the Northwest,' in hope of finding our old friends Davis and Frobisher. We found a vast unnecessary Editor's Preface: and instead of the voyages themselves, which with their picturesqueness and moral beauty shine among the fairest jewels in the diamond mine of Hakluyt, we encountered an analysis and digest of their results, which Milton was called in to justify in an inappropriate quotation. It is much as if they had undertaken to edit 'Bacon's Essays,' and had retailed what they conceived to be the substance of them in their own language; strangely failing to see that the real value of the actions or the thoughts of remarkable men does not lie in the material result which can be gathered from them, but in the heart and soul of the actors or speakers themselves. Consider what Homer's 'Odyssey' would be, reduced into an analysis.

The editor of the 'Letters of Columbus' apologizes for the rudeness of the old seaman's phraseology. Columbus, he tells us, was not so great a master of the pen as of the art of navigation. We are to make excuses for him. We are put on our guard, and warned not to be offended, before we are introduced to the



sublime record of sufferings under which a man of the highest order was staggering towards the end of his earthly calamities ; although the inarticulate fragments in which his thought breaks out from him, are strokes of natural art by the side of which literary pathos is poor and meaningless.

And even in the subjects which they select they are pursued by the same curious fatality. Why is Drake to be best known, or to be only known, in his last voyage ? Why pass over the success, and endeavor to immortalize the failure ? When Drake climbed the tree in Panama, and saw both oceans, and vowed that he would sail a ship in the Pacific ; when he crawled out upon the cliffs of Terra del Fuego, and leaned his head over the southernmost angle of the world ; when he scored a furrow round the globe with his keel, and received the homage of the barbarians of the antipodes in the name of the Virgin Queen, he was another man from what he had become after twenty years of court life and intrigue, and Spanish fighting and gold-hunting. There is a tragic solemnity in his end, if we take it as the last act of his career ; but it is his life, not his death, which we desire—not what he failed to do, but what he did.

But every bad has a worse below it, and more offensive than all these is the editor of Hawkins's ' Voyage to the South Sea.' The narrative is striking in itself ; not one of the best, but very good ; and, as it is republished complete, we can fortunately read it through, carefully shutting off Captain Bethune's notes with one hand, and we shall then find in it the same beauty which breathes in the tone of all the writings of the period.

It is a record of misfortune, but of misfortune which did no dishonor to him who sunk under it ; and there is a melancholy dignity in the style in which Hawkins tells his story which seems to say, that though he had been

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defeated, and had never again an opportunity of winning back his lost laurels, he respects himself still for the heart with which he endured a shame which would have broken a smaller man. It would have required no large exertion of editorial self-denial to have abstained from marring the pages with puns of which 'Punch' would be ashamed, and with the vulgar affectation of patronage with which the sea captain of the nineteenth century condescends to criticise and approve of his half-barbarous precursor. And what excuse can we find for such an offence as this which follows?—The war of the Araucan Indians is the most gallant episode in the history of the New World. The Spaniards themselves were not behind-hand in acknowledging the chivalry before which they quailed, and after many years of ineffectual efforts, they gave up a conflict which they never afterwards resumed; leaving the Araucans alone, of all the American races with which they came in contact, a liberty which they were unable to tear from them. It is a subject for an epic poem; and whatever admiration is due to the heroism of a brave people whom no inequality of strength could appal and no defeats could crush, these poor Indians have a right to demand of us. The story of the war was well known in Europe: Hawkins, in coasting the western shores of South America, fell in with them, and the finest passage in his book is the relation of one of the incidents of the war:—

An Indian captain was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and for that he was of name, and known to have done his devoir against them, they cut off his hands, thereby intending to disenable him to fight any more against them. But he, returning home, desirous to revenge this injury, to maintain his liberty, with the reputation of his nation, and to help to banish the Spaniard, with his tongue intreated and incited them to persevere in their accustomed valor and reputation, abasing the enemy and advancing his nation; condemning their contraries of cowardliness, and confirming it by

the cruelty used with him and other his companions in their mishaps; showing them his arms without hands, and naming his brethren whose half feet they had cut off, because they might be unable to sit on horseback; with force arguing that if they feared them not, they would not have used so great inhumanity—for fear produceth cruelty, the companion of cowardice. Thus encouraged he them to fight for their lives, limbs, and liberty, choosing rather to die an honorable death fighting, than to live in servitude as fruitless members of the commonwealth. Thus using the office of a sergeant-major, and having loaden his two stumps with bundles of arrows, he succored them who, in the succeeding battle, had their store wasted; and changing himself from place to place, animated and encouraged his countrymen with such comfortable persuasions, as it is reported and credibly believed, that he did more good with his words and presence, without striking a stroke, than a great part of the army did with fighting to the utmost.

It is an action which may take its place by the side of the myth of Mucius Scævola, or the real exploit of that brother of the poet Æschylus, who, when the Persians were flying from Marathon, clung to a ship till both his hands were hewn away, and then seized it with his teeth, leaving his name as a portent even in the splendid calendar of Athenian heroes. Captain Bethune, without call or need, making his notes, merely, as he tells us, from the suggestions of his own mind as he revised the proof-sheets, informs us, at the bottom of the page, that ‘it reminds him of the familiar lines—

For Widdrington I needs must wail,  
As one in doleful dumps;  
For when his legs were smitten off,  
He fought upon his stumps.

It must not avail him, that he has but quoted from the ballad of Chevy Chase. It is the most deformed stanza \*

\* Here is the old stanza. Let whoever is disposed to think us too hard on Captain Bethune compare them:—

For Wetharrington my harte was woe,  
That even he slayne sholde be;

of the modern deformed version which was composed in the eclipse of heart and taste, on the restoration of the Stuarts; and if such verses could then pass for serious poetry, they have ceased to sound in any ear as other than a burlesque; the associations which they arouse are only absurd, and they could only have continued to ring in his memory through their ludicrous doggrel.

When to these offences of the Society we add, that in the long labored appendices and introductions, which fill up valuable space, which increase the expense of the edition, and into reading which many readers are, no doubt betrayed, we have found nothing which assists the understanding of the stories which they are supposed to illustrate—when we have declared that we have found what is most uncommon passed without notice, and what is most trite and familiar encumbered with comment—we have unpacked our hearts of the bitterness which these volumes have aroused in us, and can now take our leave of them and go on with our more grateful subject.

Elizabeth, whose despotism was as peremptory as that of the Plantagenets, and whose ideas of the English constitution were limited in the highest degree, was, notwithstanding, more beloved by her subjects than any sovereign before or since. It was because, substantially, she was the people's sovereign; because it was given to her to conduct the outgrowth of the national life through its crisis of change, and the weight of her great mind and her great place were thrown on the people's side. She was able to paralyze the dying efforts with which, if a Stuart had been on the throne, the representatives of an effete system

For when both his leggis were hewen in to,  
He knyled and fought on his knee

Even Percy, who, on the whole, thinks well of the modern ballad, gives up this stanza as hopeless.



might have made the struggle a deadly one; and the history of England is not the history of France, because the resolution of one person held the Reformation firm till it had rooted itself in the heart of the nation, and could not be again overthrown. The Catholic faith was no longer able to furnish standing ground on which the English or any other nation could live a manly and a godly life. Feudalism, as a social organization, was not any more a system under which their energies could have scope to move. Thenceforward, not the Catholic Church, but any man to whom God had given a heart to feel and a voice to speak, was to be the teacher to whom men were to listen; and great actions were not to remain the privilege of the families of the Norman nobles, but were to be laid within the reach of the poorest plebeian who had the stuff in him to perform them. Alone, of all the sovereigns in Europe, Elizabeth saw the change which had passed over the world. She saw it, and saw it in faith, and accepted it. The England of the Catholic Hierarchy and the Norman Baron, was to cast its shell and to become the England of free thought and commerce and manufacture, which was to plough the ocean with its navies, and sow its colonies over the globe; and the first appearance of these enormous forces and the light of the earliest achievements of the new era shines through the forty years of the reign of Elizabeth with a grandeur which, when once its history is written, will be seen to be among the most sublime phenomena which the earth as yet has witnessed. The work was not of her creation; the heart of the whole English nation was stirred to its depths; and Elizabeth's place was to recognize, to love, to foster, and to guide. The Government originated nothing; at such a time it was neither necessary nor desirable that it should do so; but wherever expensive enterprises were on foot which promised ultimate good, and doubtful immediate

profit, we never fail to find among the lists of contributors the Queen's Majesty, Burghley, Leicester, Walsingham. Never chary of her presence, for Elizabeth could afford to condescend, when ships were fitting in the river for distant voyages, the Queen would go down in her barge and inspect. Frobisher, who was but a poor sailor adventurer, sees her wave her handkerchief to him from the Greenwich Palace windows, and he brings her home a narwhal's horn for a present. She honored her people, and her people loved her; and the result was that, with no cost to the Government, she saw them scattering the fleets of the Spaniards, planting America with colonies, and exploring the most distant seas. Either for honor or for expectation of profit, or from that unconscious necessity by which a great people, like a great man, will do what is right, and must do it at the right time, whoever had the means to furnish a ship, and whoever had the talent to command one, laid their abilities together and went out to pioneer, and to conquer, and to take possession, in the name of the Queen of the Sea. There was no nation so remote but what some one or other was found ready to undertake an expedition there, in the hope of opening a trade; and, let them go where they would, they were sure of Elizabeth's countenance. We find letters written by her, for the benefit of nameless adventurers, to every potentate of whom she had ever heard—to the Emperors of China, Japan, and India, the Grand Duke of Russia, the Grand Turk, the Persian 'Sofee,' and other unheard-of Asiatic and African princes; whatever was to be done in England, or by Englishmen, Elizabeth assisted when she could, and admired when she could not.

The springs of great actions are always difficult to analyze—impossible to analyze perfectly—possible to analyze only very proximately; and the force by which a man throws

a good action out of himself is invisible and mystical, like that which brings out the blossom and the fruit upon the tree. The motives which we find men urging for their enterprises seem often insufficient to have prompted them to so large a daring. They did what they did from the great unrest in them which made them do it, and what it was may be best measured by the results in the present England and America.

Nevertheless there was enough in the state of the world, and in the position of England, to have furnished abundance of conscious motive, and to have stirred the drowsiest minister of routine.

Among material occasions for exertion, the population began to outgrow the employment, and there was a necessity for plantations to serve as an outlet. Men who, under happier circumstances, might have led decent lives, and done good service, were now driven by want to desperate courses—'witness,' as Richard Hakluyt says, 'twenty tall fellows hanged last Rochester assizes for small robberies;' and there is an admirable paper addressed to the Privy Council by Christopher Carlile, Walsingham's son-in-law, pointing out the possible openings to be made in or through such plantations for home produce and manufacture.

Far below all such prudential economies and mercantile ambitions, however, lay a chivalrous enthusiasm which in these dull days we can hardly, without an effort, realize. The life-and-death wrestle between the Reformation and the old religion had settled in the last quarter of the sixteenth century into a permanent struggle between England and Spain. France was disabled. All the help which Elizabeth could spare barely enabled the Netherlands to defend themselves. Protestantism, if it conquered, must conquer on another field; and by the circumstances of the time the championship of the Reformed faith fell to the

English sailors. The sword of Spain was forged in the gold mines of Peru; the legions of Alba were only to be disarmed by intercepting the gold ships on their passage; and, inspired by an enthusiasm like that which four centuries before had precipitated the chivalry of Europe upon the East, the same spirit which in its persect degeneracy covers our bays and rivers with pleasure yachts, then fitted out armed privateers, to sweep the Atlantic, and plunder and destroy Spanish ships wherever they could meet them.

Thus, from a combination of causes, the whole force and energy of the age was directed towards the sea. The wide excitement, and the greatness of the interests at stake, raised even common men above themselves; and people who in ordinary times would have been no more than mere seamen, or mere money-making merchants, appear before us with a largeness and greatness of heart and mind in which their duties to God and their country are alike clearly and broadly seen and felt to be paramount to every other.

Ordinary English traders we find fighting Spanish war ships in behalf of the Protestant faith. The cruisers of the Spanish main were full of generous eagerness for the conversion of the savage nations to Christianity. And what is even more surprising, sites for colonization were examined and scrutinized by such men in a lofty statesmanlike spirit, and a ready insight was displayed by them into the indirect effects of a wisely-extended commerce on every highest human interest.

Again, in the conflict with the Spaniards, there was a further feeling, a feeling of genuine chivalry, which was spurring on the English, and one which must be well understood and well remembered, if men like Drake, and Hawkins, and Raleigh are to be tolerably understood. One of the English Reviews, a short time ago, was much amused with a story of



Drake having excommunicated a petty officer as a punishment for some moral offence ; the reviewer not being able to see in Drake, as a man, anything more than a highly brave and successful buccaneer, whose pretences to religion might rank with the devotion of an Italian bandit to the Madonna. And so Hawkins, and even Raleigh, are regarded by superficial persons, who see only such outward circumstances of their history as correspond with their own impressions. The high nature of these men, and the high objects which they pursued, will only rise out and become visible to us as we can throw ourselves back into their times and teach our hearts to feel as they felt. We do not find in the language of the voyagers themselves, or of those who lent them their help at home, any of that weak watery talk of 'protection of aborigines,' which, as soon as it is translated into fact, becomes the most active policy for their destruction, soul and body. But the stories of the dealings of the Spaniards with the conquered Indians, which were widely known in England, seem to have affected all classes of people, not with pious passive horror, but with a genuine human indignation. A thousand anecdotes in detail we find scattered up and down the pages of Hakluyt, who, with a view to make them known, translated Peter Martyr's letters ; and each commonest sailor-boy who had heard these stories from his childhood among the tales of his father's fireside, had longed to be a man, that he might go out and become avenger of a gallant and suffering people. A high mission, undertaken with a generous heart seldom fails to make those worthy of it to whom it is given ; and it was a point of honor, if of nothing more, among the English sailors, to do no discredit by their conduct to the greatness of their cause. The high courtesy, the chivalry of the Spanish nobles, so conspicuous in their dealings with their European rivals, either

failed to touch them in their dealings with uncultivated idolaters, or the high temper of the aristocracy was unable to restrain or to influence the masses of the soldiers. It would be as ungenerous as it would be untrue to charge upon their religion the grievous actions of men who called themselves the armed missionaries of Catholicism when the Catholic priests and bishops were the loudest in the indignation with which they denounced them. But we are obliged to charge upon it that slow and subtle influence so inevitably exercised by any religion which is divorced from life, and converted into a thing of form, or creed, or ceremony, or system—which could permit the same men to be extravagant in a sincere devotion to the Queen of Heaven, whose entire lower nature, unsubdued and unaffected, was given up to thirst of gold, and plunder, and sensuality. If religion does not make men more humane than they would be without it, it makes them fatally less so; and it is to be feared that the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers, which had oscillated to the other extreme, and had again crystallized into a formal antinomian fanaticism, reproduced the same fatal results as those in which the Spaniards had set them their unworthy precedent. But the Elizabethan navigators, full for the most part with large kindness, wisdom, gentleness, and beauty, bear names untainted, as far as we know, with a single crime against the savages of America; and the name of England was as famous in the Indian seas as that of Spain was infamous. On the banks of the Oronoko there was remembered for a hundred years the noble captain who had come there, from the great Queen beyond the seas; and Raleigh speaks the language of the heart of his country, when he urges the English statesmen to colonize Guiana, and exults in the glorious hope of driving the white marauder into the Pacific, and restoring the Incas to the throne of Peru.

Who will not be persuaded (he says) that now at length the great Judge of the world hath heard the sighs, groans, and lamentations, hath seen the tears and blood of so many millions of innocent men, women, and children; afflicted, robbed, reviled, branded with hot irons, roasted, dismembered, mangled, stabbed, whipped, racked, scalded with hot oil, put to the strapado, ripped alive, beheaded in sport, drowned, dashed against the rocks, famished, devoured by mastiffs, burned, and by infinite cruelties consumed, and purposeth to scourge and plague that cursed nation, and to take the yoke of servitude from that distressed people, as free by nature as any Christian?

Poor Raleigh! if peace and comfort in this world were of much importance to him, it was in an ill day that he provoked the revenge of Spain. The strength of England was needed at the moment at its own door; the Armada came, and there was no means of executing such an enterprise. And afterwards the throne of Elizabeth was filled by a Stuart, and Guiana was to be no scene of glory for Raleigh; rather, as later historians are pleased to think, it was the grave of his reputation.

But the hope burned clear in him through all the weary years of unjust imprisonment; and when he was a gray-headed old man, the base son of a bad mother used it to betray him. The success of his last enterprise was made the condition under which he was to be pardoned for a crime which he had not committed; and its success depended, as he knew, on its being kept secret from the Spaniards. James required of Raleigh on his allegiance a detail of what he proposed, giving him at the same time his word as a king that the secret should be safe with him. The next day it was sweeping out of the port of London in the swiftest of the Spanish ships, with private orders to the Governor of St Thomas to provoke a collision when Raleigh should arrive there, which should afterwards cost him his heart's blood.

We modern readers may run rapidly over the series of epithets under which Raleigh has

catalogued the Indian sufferings, hoping that they are exaggerated, seeing that they are horrible, and closing our eyes against them with swiftest haste ; but it was not so when every epithet suggested a hundred familiar facts ; and some of these (not resting on English prejudices, but on Spanish evidence, which is too full of shame and sorrow to be suspected) shall be given in this place, however old a story it may be thought ; because, as we said above, it is impossible to understand the actions of these men, unless we are familiar with the feelings of which their hearts were full.

The massacres under Cortez and Pizarro, terrible as they were, were not the occasion which stirred the deepest indignation. They had the excuse of what might be called, for want of a better word, necessity, and of the desperate position of small bands of men in the midst of enemies who might be counted by millions. And in De Soto, when he burnt his guides in Florida (it was his practice, when there was danger of treachery, that those who were left alive might take warning) ; or in Vasco Nunnez, praying to the Virgin on the mountains of Darien, and going down from off them into the valleys to hunt the Indian caciques, and fling them alive to his bloodhounds ; there was, at least, with all this fierceness and cruelty, a desperate courage which we cannot refuse to admire, and which mingles with and corrects our horror. It is the refinement of the Spaniard's cruelty in the settled and conquered provinces, excused by no danger and provoked by no resistance, the details of which witness to the infernal coolness with which it was perpetrated ; and the great bearing of the Indians themselves under an oppression which they despaired of resisting, raises the whole history to the rank of a world-wide tragedy, in which the nobler but weaker nature was crushed under a malignant force which was stronger and yet meaner than itself. Gold



hunting and lust were the two passions for which the Spaniards cared; and the fate of the Indian women was only more dreadful than that of the men, who were ganged and chained to a labor in the mines which was only to cease with their lives, in a land where but a little before they had lived a free contented people, more innocent of crime than perhaps any people upon earth. If we can conceive what our own feelings-would be—if, in the ‘development of the mammalia,’ some baser but more powerful race than man were to appear upon this planet, and we and our wives and children at our own happy firesides were degraded from our freedom, and became to them what the lower animals are to us, we can perhaps realize the feelings of the enslaved nations of Hispaniola.

As a harsh justification of slavery, it is sometimes urged that men who do not deserve to be slaves will prefer death to the endurance of it; and that if they prize their liberty, it is always in their power to assert it in the old Roman fashion. Tried even by so hard a rule the Indians vindicated their right; and, before the close of the sixteenth century, the entire group of the Western Islands in the hands of the Spaniards, containing, when Columbus discovered them, many millions of inhabitants, were left literally desolate from suicide. Of the anecdotes of this terrible self-immolation, as they were then known in England, here are a few out of many.

The first is simple, and a specimen of the ordinary method. A Yucatan cacique, who was forced with his old subjects to labor in the mines, at last ‘calling those miners into an house, to the number of ninety-five, he thus debateth with them:—

‘My worthy companions and friends, why desire we to live any longer under so cruel a servitude? Let us now go unto the perpetual seat of our ancestors, for we shall there have rest from these intolerable cares and grievances which we endure under the subjection of the

unthankful. Go ye before, I will presently follow you. Having so spoken, he held out whole handfuls of those leaves which take away life, prepared for the purpose, and giving every one part thereof, being kindled to suck up the fume; who obeyed his command, the king and his chief kinsmen reserving the last place for themselves.

We speak of the crime of suicide, but few persons will see a crime in this sad and stately leave-taking of a life which it was no longer possible to bear with unbroken hearts. We do not envy the Indian who with Spaniards before him as an evidence of the fruits which their creed brought forth, deliberately exchanged for it the old religion of his country, which could sustain him in an action of such melancholy grandeur. But the Indians did not always reply to their oppressors with escaping passively beyond their hands. Here is a story with matter in it for as rich a tragedy as *Œdipus* or *Agamemnon*; and in its stern and tremendous features, more nearly resembling them than any which were conceived even by *Shakespeare*.

An officer named *Orlando* had taken the daughter of a Cuban cacique to be his mistress. She was with child by him, but suspecting her of being engaged in some other intrigue he had her fastened to two wooden spits, not intending to kill her, but to terrify her; and setting her before the fire, he ordered that she should be turned by the servants of the kitchen.

The maiden, stricken with fear through the cruelty thereof, and strange kind of torment, presently gave up the ghost. The cacique, her father, understanding the matter, took thirty of his men and went to the house of the captain, who was then absent, and slew his wife, whom he had married after that wicked act committed, and the women who were companions of the wife, and her servants every one. Then shutting the door of the house, and putting fire under it, he burnt himself and all his companions that assisted him, together with the captain's dead family and goods.

This is no fiction or poet's romance. It is a tale of wrath and revenge, which in sober dreadful truth enacted itself upon this earth, and remains among the eternal records of the doings of mankind upon it. As some relief to its most terrible features, we follow it with a story which has a touch in it of diabolical humor.

The slave-owners finding their slaves escaping thus unprosperously out of their grasp, set themselves to find a remedy for so desperate a disease, and were swift to avail themselves of any weakness, mental or bodily, through which to retain them in life. One of these proprietors being informed that a number of his people intended to kill themselves on a certain day, at a particular spot, and knowing by experience that they were too likely to do it, presented himself there at the time which had been fixed upon, and telling the Indians when they arrived that he knew their intention and that it was vain for them to attempt to keep anything a secret from him, he ended with saying, that he had come there to kill himself with them; that as he had used them ill in this world, he might use them worse in the next; 'with which he did dissuade them presently from their purpose.' With what efficacy such believers in the immortality of the soul were likely to recommend either their faith or their God; rather, how terribly all the devotion and all the earnestness with which the poor priests who followed in the wake of the conqueror labored to recommend it were shamed and paralyzed, they themselves too bitterly lament.

It was idle to send out governor after governor with orders to stay such practices. They had but to arrive on the scene to become infected with the same fever; or if any remnant of Castilian honor, or any faintest echoes of the faith which they professed, still flickered in a few of the best and noblest, they could but look on with folded hands in ineffectual

mourning; they could do nothing without soldiers, and the soldiers were the worst offenders. Hispaniola became a desert; the gold was in the mines, and there were no slaves left remaining to extract it. One means which the Spaniards dared to employ to supply the vacancy, brought about an incident which in its piteous pathos exceeds any story we have ever heard. Crimes and criminals are swept away by time, nature finds an antidote for their poison, and they and their ill consequences alike are blotted out and perish. If we do not forgive the villain at least we cease to hate him, as it grows more clear to us that he injures none so deeply as himself. But the *θηριώδης κακία*, the enormous wickedness by which humanity itself has been outraged and disgraced, we cannot forgive; we cannot cease to hate that; the years roll away, but the tints of it remain on the pages of history, deep and horrible as the day on which they were entered there.

When the Spaniards understood the simple opinion of the Yucatan islanders concerning the souls of their departed, which, after their sins purged in the cold northern mountains should pass into the south, to the intent that, leaving their own country of their own accord, they might suffer themselves to be brought to Hispaniola, they did persuade those poor wretches, that they came from those places where they should see their parents and children, and all their kindred and friends that were dead, and should enjoy all kinds of delights with the embracements and fruition of all beloved beings. And they, being infected and possessed with these crafty and subtle imaginations, singing and rejoicing left their country, and followed vain and idle hope. But when they saw that they were deceived, and neither met their parents nor any that they desired, but were compelled to undergo grievous sovereignty and command, and to endure cruel and extreme labor, they either slew themselves, or, choosing to famish, gave up their fair spirits, being persuaded by no reason or violence to take food. So these miserable Yucatan came to their end.

It was once more as it was in the days of the Apostles. The New World was first offered



to the holders of the old traditions. They were the husbandmen first chosen for the new vineyard, and blood and desolation were the only fruits which they reared upon it. In their hands it was becoming a kingdom, not of God, but of the devil, and a sentence of blight went out against them and against their works. How fatally it has worked, let modern Spain and Spanish America bear witness. We need not follow further the history of their dealings with the Indians. For their colonies, a fatality appears to have followed all attempts at Catholic colonization. Like shoots from an old decaying tree which no skill and no care can rear, they were planted, and for a while they might seem to grow; but their life was never more than a lingering death, a failure, which to a thinking person would outweigh in the arguments against Catholicism whole libraries of faultless *catenas*, and a *consensus patrum* unbroken through fifteen centuries for the supremacy of St Peter.

There is no occasion to look for superstitious causes to explain the phenomenon. The Catholic faith had ceased to be the faith of the large mass of earnest thinking capable persons; and to those who can best do the work, all work in this world sooner or later is committed. America was the natural home for Protestants; persecuted at home, they sought a place where they might worship God in their own way, without danger of stake or gibbet, and the French Huguenots, as afterwards the English Puritans, early found their way there. The fate of a party of Coligny's people, who had gone out as settlers, shall be the last of these stories, illustrating, as it does in the highest degree, the wrath and fury with which the passions on both sides were boiling. A certain John Ribault, with about 400 companions, had emigrated to Florida. They were quiet inoffensive people, and lived in peace there several years, cultivating the soil, build-

ing villages, and on the best possible terms with the natives. Spain was at the time at peace with France ; we are, therefore, to suppose that it was in pursuance of the great crusade, in which they might feel secure of the secret, if not the confessed, sympathy of the Guises, that a powerful Spanish fleet bore down upon this settlement. The French made no resistance, and they were seized and flayed alive, and their bodies hung out upon the trees, with an inscription suspended over them, 'Not as Frenchmen, but as heretics.' At Paris all was sweetness and silence. The settlement was tranquilly surrendered to the same men who had made it the scene of their atrocity ; and two years later, 500 of the very Spaniards who had been most active in the murder were living there in peaceable possession, in two forts which their relation with the natives had obliged them to build. It was well that there were other Frenchmen living, of whose consciences the Court had not the keeping, and who were able on emergencies to do what was right without consulting it. A certain privateer, named Dominique de Gourges, secretly armed and equipped a vessel at Rochelle, and stealing across the Atlantic and in two days collecting a strong party of Indians, he came down suddenly upon the forts, and, taking them by storm, slew or afterwards hanged every man he found there, leaving their bodies on the trees on which they had hanged the Huguenots, with their own inscription reversed against them,—'Not as Spaniards, but as murderers.' For which exploit, well deserving of all honest men's praise, Dominique de Gourges had to fly his country for his life ; and, coming to England, was received with honorable welcome by Elizabeth.

It was at such a time, and to take their part amidst such scenes as these, that the English navigators appeared along the shores of South America, as the armed soldiers of the Reforma-

tion, and as the avengers of humanity. As their enterprise was grand and lofty, so for the most part was the manner in which they bore themselves worthy of it. They were no nation of saints, in the modern sentimental sense of that word; they were prompt, stern men—more ready ever to strike an enemy than to parley with him; and, private adventurers as they all were, it was natural enough that private rapacity and private badness should be found among them as among other mortals. Every Englishman who had the means was at liberty to fit out a ship or ships, and if he could produce tolerable vouchers for himself, received at once a commission from the Court. The battles of England were fought by her children, at their own risk and cost, and they were at liberty to repay themselves the expense of their expeditions by plundering at the cost of the national enemy. Thus, of course, in a mixed world, there were found mixed marauding crews of scoundrels, who played the game which a century later was played with such effect by the pirates of the Tortugas. Negro hunters too, there were, and a bad black slave trade—in which Elizabeth herself, being hard driven for money, did not disdain to invest her capital—but on the whole, and in the war with the Spaniards, as in the war with the elements, the conduct and character of the English sailors, considering what they were and the work which they were sent to do, present us all through that age with such a picture of gallantry, disinterestedness, and high heroic energy, as has never been over-matched; the more remarkable, as it was the fruit of no drill or discipline, no tradition, no system, no organized training, but was the free native growth of a noble virgin soil.

Before starting on an expedition, it was usual for the crew and the officers to meet and arrange among themselves a series of articles of conduct, to which they bound themselves by

a formal agreement, the entire body itself undertaking to see to their observance. It is quite possible that strong religious profession, and even sincere profession, might be accompanied, as it was in the Spaniards, with everything most detestable. It is not sufficient of itself to prove that their actions would correspond with it, but it is one among a number of evidences; and coming as most of these men come before us, with hands clear of any blood but of fair and open enemies, their articles may pass at least as indications of what they were.

Here we have a few instances:—

Richard Hawkins's ship's company was, as he himself informs us, an unusually loose one. Nevertheless, we find them 'gathered together every morning and evening to serve God;' and a fire on board, which only Hawkins's presence of mind prevented from destroying ship and crew together, was made use of by the men as an occasion to banish swearing out of the ship.

With a general consent of all our company, it was ordained that there should be a palmer or ferula which should be in the keeping of him who was taken with an oath; and that he who had the palmer should give to every one that he took swearing, a palmada with it and the ferula; and whosoever at the time of evening or morning prayer was found to have the palmer, should have three blows given him by the captain or the master; and that he should still be bound to free himself by taking another, or else to run in danger of continuing the penalty, which being executed a few days, reformed the vice, so that in three days together was not one oath heard to be sworn.

The regulations for Luke Fox's voyage commenced thus:—

For as much as the good success and prosperity of every action doth consist in the due service and glorifying of God, knowing that not only our being and preservation, but the prosperity of all our actions and enterprises, do immediately depend on His Almighty goodness and mercy: it is provided—

First, that all the company, as well officers as others,



shall duly repair every day twice at the call of the bell to hear public prayers to be read, such as are authorized by the Church, and that in a godly and devout manner, as good Christians ought.

Secondly, that no man shall swear by the name of God, or use any profane oath, or blaspheme His holy name.

To symptoms such as these, we cannot but assign a very different value when they are the spontaneous growth of common minds, unstimulated by sense of propriety or rules of the service, or other official influence lay or ecclesiastic, from what attaches to the somewhat similar ceremonials in which among persons whose position is conspicuous, important enterprises are now and then inaugurated.

We have said as much as we intend to say of the treatment by the Spaniards of the Indian women. Sir Walter Raleigh is commonly represented by historians as rather defective, if he was remarkable at all, on the moral side of his character. Yet Raleigh can declare proudly, that all the time he was on the *Oronoko*, 'neither by force nor other means had any of his men intercourse with any woman there;' and the narrator of the incidents of Raleigh's last voyage acquaints his correspondent 'with some particulars touching the government of the fleet, which, although other men in their voyages doubtless in some measure observed, yet in all the great volumes which have been written touching voyages, there is no precedent of so godly severe and martial government, which not only in itself is laudable and worthy of imitation, but is also fit to be written and engraven on every man's soul that coveteth to do honor to his country.'

Once more, the modern theory of Drake is, as we said above, that he was a gentleman-like pirate on a large scale, who is indebted for the place which he fills in history to the indistinct ideas of right and wrong prevailing in the unenlightened age in which he lived, and who

therefore demands all the toleration of our own enlarged humanity to allow him to remain there. Let us see how the following incident can be made to coincide with this hypothesis :—

A few days after clearing the Channel on his first great voyage, he fell in with a small Spanish ship, which he took for a prize. He committed the care of it to a certain Mr. Doughtie, a person much trusted by, and personally very dear to him, and this second vessel was to follow him as a tender.

In dangerous expeditions into unknown seas, a second smaller ship was often indispensable to success ; but many finely intended enterprises were ruined by the cowardice of the officers to whom such ships were entrusted ; who shrank as danger thickened, and again and again took advantage of darkness or heavy weather to make sail for England and forsake their commander. Hawkins twice suffered in this way ; so did Sir Humfrey Gilbert ; and, although Drake's own kind feeling for his old friend has prevented him from leaving an exact account of his offence, we gather from the scattered hints which are let fall, that he, too, was meditating a similar piece of treason. However, it may or may not have been thus. But when at Port St. Julien, 'our General,' says one of the crew,—

Began to inquire diligently of the actions of Mr. Thomas Doughtie, and found them not to be such as he looked for, but tending rather to contention or mutiny, or some other disorder, whereby, without redresse, the success of the voyage might greatly have been hazarded. Whereupon the company was called together and made acquainted with the particulars of the cause, which were found, partly by Mr. Doughtie's own confession, and partly by the evidence of the fact, to be true, which, when our General saw, although his private affection to Mr. Doughtie (as he then. in the presence of us all, sacredly protested) was great, yet the care which he had of the state of the voyage, of the expectation of Her Majesty, and of the honor of his country, did more touch him, as indeed it ought, than the private respect of one man ; so that the cause being thoroughly heard,

and all things done in good order as near as might be to the course of our law in England, it was concluded that Mr. Doughtie should receive punishment according to the quality of the offence. And he, seeing no remedy but patience for himself, desired before his death to receive the communion, which he did at the hands of Mr. Fletcher, our minister, and our General himself accompanied him in that holy action, which, being done, and the place of execution made ready, he, having embraced our General, and taken leave of all the company, with prayers for the Queen's Majesty and our realm, in quiet sort laid his head to the block, where he ended his life. This being done, our General made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading us to unity, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage, and for the better confirmation thereof, willed every man the next Sunday following to prepare himself to receive the communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to do, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his business.

The simple majesty of this anecdote can gain nothing from any comment which we might offer upon it. The crew of a common English ship organizing, of their own free motion, on that wild shore, a judgment hall more grand and awful than any most elaborate law court, is not to be reconciled with the pirate theory. Drake, it is true, appropriated and brought home a million and a half of Spanish treasure, while England and Spain were at peace. He took that treasure because for many years the officers of the Inquisition had made free at their pleasure with the lives and goods of English merchants and seamen. The king of Spain, when appealed to, had replied that he had no power over the Holy House; and it was necessary to make the king of Spain, or the Inquisition, or whoever were the parties responsible, feel that they could not play their pious pranks with impunity. When Drake seized the bullion at Panama, he sent word to the Viceroy that he should now learn to respect the properties of English subjects; and he added, that if four English sailors, who were prisoners in Mexico, were molested, he would execute 2,000 Spaniards and send the Viceroy

their heads. Spain and England were at peace, but Popery and Protestantism were at war—deep, deadly, and irreconcilable.

Wherever we find them, they are still the same. In the courts of Japan or of China; fighting Spaniards in the Pacific, or prisoners among the Algerines; founding colonies which by-and-by were to grow into enormous Transatlantic republics, or exploring in crazy pinnacles the fierce latitudes of the Polar seas,—they are the same indomitable God-fearing men whose life was one great liturgy. ‘The ice was strong, but God was stronger,’ says one of Frobisher’s men, after grinding a night and a day among the icebergs, not waiting for God to come down and split the ice for them, but toiling through the long hours, himself and the rest fending off the vessel with poles and planks, with death glaring at them out of the rocks. Icebergs were strong, Spaniards were strong, and storms, and corsairs, and rocks and reefs, which no chart had then noted—they were all strong; but God was stronger, and that was all which they cared to know.

Out of the vast numbers of illustrations it is difficult to make wise selections, but the attention floats loosely over generalities, and only individual instances can seize it and hold it fast. We shall attempt to bring our readers face to face with some of these men; not, of course, to write their biographies, but to sketch the details of a few scenes, in the hope that they may tempt those under whose eyes they may fall to look for themselves to complete the perfect figure.

Some two miles above the port of Dartmouth, once among the most important harbors in England. on a projecting angle of land which runs out into the river at the head of one of its most beautiful reaches, there has stood for some centuries the Manor House of Greenaway. The water runs deep all the way to it from the sea, and the largest vessels may ride



with safety within a stone's throw of the windows. In the latter half of the sixteenth century there must have met, in the hall of this mansion, a party as remarkable as could have been found anywhere in England. Humfrey and Adrian Gilbert, with their half-brother, Walter Raleigh, here, when little boys, played at sailors in the reaches of Long Stream; in the summer evenings doubtless rowing down with the tide to the port, and wondering at the quaint figure-heads and carved prows of the ships which thronged it; or climbing on board, and listening, with hearts beating, to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset. And here in later life, matured men, whose boyish dreams had become heroic action, they used again to meet in the intervals of quiet, and the rock is shown underneath the house where Raleigh smoked the first tobacco. Another remarkable man, of whom we shall presently speak more closely, could not fail to have made a fourth at these meetings. A sailor boy of Sandwich, the adjoining parish, John Davis, showed early a genius which could not have escaped the eye of such neighbors, and in the atmosphere of Greenaway he learned to be as noble as the Gilberts, and as tender and delicate as Raleigh. Of this party, for the present we confine ourselves to the host and owner, Humfrey Gilbert, knighted afterwards by Elizabeth. Led by the scenes of his childhood to the sea and to see adventures, and afterwards, as his mind unfolded, to study his profession scientifically, we find him as soon as he was old enough to think for himself, or make others listen to him, 'amending the great errors of naval sea cards, whose common fault is to make the degree of longitude in every latitude of one common bigness;' inventing instruments for taking observations, studying the form of the earth, and convincing himself that there was a north-west passage, and studying the necessities of his country, and discovering

the remedies for them in colonization and extended markets for home manufactures. Gilbert was examined before the Queen's Majesty and the Privy Counsel, and the record of his examination he has himself left to us in a paper which he afterwards drew up, and strange enough reading it is. The most admirable conclusions stand side by side with the wildest conjectures.

Homer and Aristotle are pressed into service to prove that the ocean runs round the three old continents, and that America therefore is necessarily an island. The Gulf Stream, which he had carefully observed, eked out by a theory of the *primum mobile*, is made to demonstrate a channel to the north, corresponding to Magellan's Straits in the south, Gilbert believing, in common with almost every one of his day, that these straits were the only opening into the Pacific, and the land to the south was unbroken to the Pole. He prophesies a market in the East for our manufactured linen and calicoes :—

The Easterns greatly prizing the same, as appeareth in Hester, where the pomp is expressed of the great King of India, Ahasuerus, who matched the colored clothes wherewith his houses and tents were apparelled, with gold and silver, as part of his greatest treasure.

These and other such arguments were the best analysis which Sir Humfrey had to offer of the spirit which he felt to be working in him. We may think what we please of them ; but we can have but one thought of the great grand words with which the memorial concludes, and they alone would explain the love which Elizabeth bore him :—

Never, therefore, mislike with me for taking in hand any laudable and honest enterprise, for if through pleasure or idleness we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame abideth forever.

Give me leave, therefore, without offence, always to live and die in this mind ; that he is not worthy to live

at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honor, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal, wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno*.

Two voyages which he undertook at his own cost, which shattered his fortune, and failed, as they naturally might, since inefficient help or mutiny of subordinates, or other disorders, are inevitable conditions under which more or less great men must be content to see their great thoughts mutilated by the feebleness of their instruments, did not dishearten him, and in June 1583 a last fleet of five ships sailed from the port of Dartmouth, with commission from the Queen to discover and take possession from latitude 45° to 50° North—a voyage not a little noteworthy, there being planted in the course of it the first English colony west of the Atlantic. Elizabeth had a foreboding that she would never see him again. She sent him a jewel as a last token of her favor, and she desired Raleigh to have his picture taken before he went.

The history of the voyage was written by a Mr. Edward Hayes, of Dartmouth, one of the principal actors in it, and as a composition it is more remarkable for fine writing than any very commendable thought in the author. But Sir Humfrey's nature shines through the infirmity of his chronicler; and in the end, indeed, Mr Hayes himself is subdued into a better mind. He had lost money by the voyage, and we will hope his higher nature was only under a temporary eclipse. The fleet consisted (it is well to observe the ships and the size of them) of the 'Delight,' 120 tons; the barque 'Raleigh,' 200 tons (this ship deserted off the Land's End); the 'Golden Hinde' and the 'Swallow,' 40 tons each; and the 'Squirrel,' which was called the frigate, 10 tons. For the uninitiated in such matters, we may add, that if in a vessel the size of the last, a member of the Yacht Club would consider that he had

earned a club-room immortality if he had ventured a run in the depth of summer from Cowes to the Channel Islands.

We were in all (says Mr. Hayes) 260 men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice. Besides, for solace of our own people, and allurements of the savages, we are provided of music in good variety, not omitting the least toys as, morris dancers, hobby horses, and May-like conceits to delight the savage people.

The expedition reached Newfoundland without accident. St John's was taken possession of, and a colony left there ; and Sir Humfrey then set out exploring along the American coast to the south, he himself doing all the work in his little 10-ton cutter, the service being too dangerous for the larger vessels to venture on. One of these had remained at St. John's. He was now accompanied only by the ' Delight ' and the ' Golden Hinde,' and these two keeping as near the shore as they dared, he spent what remained of the summer examining every creek and bay, marking the soundings, taking the bearings of the possible harbors, and risking his life, as every hour he was obliged to risk it in such a service, in thus leading, as it were, the forlorn hope in the conquest of the New World. How dangerous it was we shall presently see. It was towards the end of August.

The evening was fair and pleasant, yet not without token of storm to ensue, and most part of this Wednesday night, like the swan that singeth before her death, they in the ' Delight ' continued in sounding of drums and trumpets and fifes, also winding the cornets and hautboys, and in the end of their jollity left with the battell and ringing of doleful knells.

Two days after came the storm ; the ' Delight ' struck upon a bank, and went down in sight of the other vessels, which were unable to render her any help. Sir Humfrey's papers, among other things, were all lost in her ; at



the time considered by him an irreparable misfortune. But it was little matter, he was never to need them. The 'Golden Hinde' and the 'Squirrel' were now left alone of the five ships. The provisions were running-short, and the summer season was closing. Both crews were on short allowance ; and with much difficulty Sir Humfrey was prevailed upon to be satisfied for the present with what he had done, and to lay off for England.

So upon Saturday, in the afternoon, the 31st of August, we changed our course, and returned back for England, at which very instant, even in winding about there passed along between us and the land, which we now forsook, a very lion, to our seeming, in shape, hair, and color ; not swimming after the manner of a beast by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body, except his legs in sight, neither yet diving under and again rising as the manner is of whales, porpoises, and other fish, but confidently showing himself without hiding, notwithstanding that we presented ourselves in open view and gesture to amaze him. Thus he passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ugly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes ; and to bidde us farewell, coming right against the 'Hinde,' he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld so far as we were able to discern the same, as men prone to wonder at every strange thing. What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *Bonum Omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, it is were the devil.

We have do doubt that he did think it was the devil ; men in those days believing really that evil was more than a principle or a necessary accident, and that in call their labor for God and for right, they must their ccount to have to fight with the devil in his proper person. But if we are to all it superstition, and if this were no devil in the form of a roaring lion, but a mere great seal or sea-lion, it is a more innocent superstition to impersonate so real a power, and it requires a bolder heart to rise up against it and defy it in its living

terror, than to sublimate it away into a philosophical principle, and to forget a battle with it in speculating on its origin and nature. But to follow the brave Sir Humfrey, whose work of fighting with the devil was now over, and who was passing to his reward. The 2nd of September the General came on board the 'Golden Hinde' 'to make merry with us.' He greatly deplored the loss of his books and papers, but he was full of confidence from what he had seen, and talked with eagerness and warmth of the new expedition for the following spring. Apocryphal gold-mines still occupying the minds of Mr Hayes and others, they were persuaded that Sir Humfrey was keeping to himself some such discovery which he had secretly made, and they tried hard to extract it from him. They could make nothing, however, of his odd, ironical answers, and their sorrow at the catastrophe which followed is sadly blended with disappointment that such a secret should have perished. Sir Humfrey doubtless saw America with other eyes than theirs, and gold-mines richer than California in its huge rivers and savannahs.

Leaving the issue of this good hope (about the gold), (continues Mr Hayes), to God, who only knoweth the truth thereof, I will hasten to the end of this tragedy, which must be knit up in the person of our General, and as it was God's ordinance upon him, even so the vehement persuasion of his friends could nothing avail to divert him from his wilful resolution of going in his frigate; and when he was entreated by the captain, master, and others, his well-wishers in the 'Hinde,' not to venture, this was his answer—'I will not forsake my little company going homewards, with whom I have so many storms and perils.'

Two-thirds of the way home they met foul weather and terrible seas, 'breaking short and pyramid-wise.' Men who had all their lives 'occupied the sea' had never seen it more outrageous. 'We had also upon our mainyard an apparition of a little fire by night, which seamen do call Castor and Pollux.'

Monday the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away oppressed by waves, but at that time recovered, and giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried unto us in the 'Hinde' so often as we did approach within hearing, 'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land,' reiterating the same speech, well beseeeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, and I can testify that he was. The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the 'Golden Hinde, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight; and withal our watch cried, 'The General was cast away,' which was too true.

Thus faithfully (concludes Mr Hayes, in some degree rising above himself) I have related this story, wherein some spark of the knight's virtues, though he be extinguished, may happily appear; he remaining resolute to a purpose honest and godly as was this, to discover, possess and reduce unto the service of God and Christian piety, those remote and heathen countries of America. Such is the infinite bounty of God, who from every evil deriveth good, that fruit may grow in time of our travelling in these North-Western lands (as has it not grown?), and the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of the voyage did correct the intemperate humors which before we noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavory and less delightful his other manifold virtues.

Thus as he was refined and made nearer unto the image of God, so it pleased the Divine will to resume him unto Himself, whither both his and every other high and noble mind have always aspired.

Such was Sir Humfrey Gilbert; still in the prime of his years when the Atlantic swallowed him. Like the gleam of a landscape lit suddenly for a moment by the lightning, these few scenes flash down to us across the centuries: but what a life must that have been of which this was the conclusion! We have glimpses of him a few years earlier, when he won his spurs in Ireland—won them by deeds which to us seem terrible in their ruthlessness, but which won the applause of Sir Henry Sidney as too high for praise or even reward. Checkered like all of us with lines of light and darkness, he was, nevertheless, one of a race which has ceased to be. We look round for them, and we can hardly believe that the same blood is

flowing in our veins. Brave we may still be, and strong perhaps as they, but the high moral grace which made bravery and strength so beautiful is departed from us forever.

Our space is sadly limited for historical portrait painting; but we must find room for another of that Greenaway party whose nature was as fine as that of Gilbert, and who intellectually was more largely gifted. The latter was drowned in 1583. In 1585 John Davis left Dartmouth on his first voyage into the Polar seas; and twice subsequently he went again, venturing in small ill-equipped vessels of thirty or forty tons into the most dangerous seas. These voyages were as remarkable for their success as for the daring with which they were accomplished, and Davis's epitaph is written on the map of the world, where his name still remains to commemorate his discoveries. Brave as he was, he is distinguished by a peculiar and exquisite sweetness of nature, which, from many little facts of his life, seems to have affected every one with whom he came in contact in a remarkable degree. We find men, for the love of Master Davis, leaving their firesides to sail with him, without other hope or motion: we find silver bullets cast to shoot him in a mutiny; the hard rude natures of the mutineers being awed by something in his carriage which was not like that of a common man. He has written the account of one of his northern voyages himself; one of those, by-the-by, which the Hakluyt Society have mutilated; and there is an imaginative beauty in it, and a rich delicacy of expression, which is called out in him by the first sight of strange lands and things and people.

To show what he was, we should have preferred, if possible to have taken the story of his expedition into the South Seas, in which, under circumstances of singular difficulty, he was deserted by Candish, under whom he had sailed; and after inconceivable trials from



famine, mutiny, and storm, ultimately saved himself and his ship, and such of the crew as had chosen to submit to his orders. But it is a long history, and will not admit of being curtailed. As an instance of the stuff of which it was composed, he ran back in the black night in a gale of wind through the Straits of Magellan, *by a chart which he had made with the eye in passing up*. His anchors were lost or broken; the cables were parted. He could not bring up the ship; there was nothing for it but to run, and he carried her safe through along a channel often not three miles broad, sixty miles from end to end, and twisting like the reaches of a river.

For the present, however, we are forced to content ourselves with a few sketches out of the north-west voyages. Here is one, for instance, which shows how an Englishman could deal with the Indians. Davis had landed at Gilbert's Sound, and gone up the country exploring. On his return he found his crew loud in complaints of the thievish propensities of the natives, and urgent to have an example made of some of them. On the next occasion he fired a gun at them with blank cartridge; but their nature was still too strong for them.

Seeing iron (he says), they could in no case forbear stealing; which, when I perceived, it did but minister to me occasion of laughter to see their simplicity, and I willed that they should not be hardly used, but that our company should be more diligent to keep their things, supposing it to be very hard in so short a time to make them know their evils.

In his own way, however, he took an opportunity of administering a lesson to them of a more wholesome kind than could be given with gunpowder and bullets. Like the rest of his countrymen, he believed the savage Indians in their idolatries to be worshippers of the devil. 'They are witches,' he says; 'they have images in great store, and use many kinds of

enchantments.' And these enchantments they tried on one occasion to put in force against himself and his crew.

Being on shore on the 4th day of July, one of them made a long oration, and then kindled a fire, into which with many strange words and gestures he put divers things, which we supposed to be a sacrifice. Myself and certain of my company standing by, they desired us to go into the smoke. I desired them to go into the smoke, which they would by no means do. I then took one of them and thrust him into the smoke, and willed one of my company to tread out the fire and spurn it into the sea, which was done to show them that we did condemn their sorceries.

It is a very English story—exactly what a modern Englishman would do; only, perhaps, not believing that there was any real devil in the case, which makes a difference. However, real or not real, after seeing him patiently put up with such an injury, we will hope the poor Greenlander had less respect for the devil than formerly.

Leaving Gilbert's Sound, Davis went on to the north-west, and in lat. 63° fell in with a barrier of ice, which he coasted for thirteen days without finding an opening. The very sight of an iceberg was new to all his crew; and the ropes and shrouds, though it was midsummer, becoming compassed with ice,—

The people began to fall sick and faint-hearted—whereupon, very orderly, with good discretion, they entreated me to regard the safety of mine own life, as well as the preservation of theirs; and that I should not, through overbouldness, leave their widows and fatherless children to give me bitter curses.

Whereupon, seeking counsel of God, it pleased His Divine Majesty to move my heart to prosecute that which I hope shall be to His glory, and to the contentation of every Christian mind.

He had two vessels—one of some burthen, the other a pinnace of thirty tons. The result of the counsel which he had sought was, that he made over his own large vessel to such as

wished to return, and himself, 'thinking it better to die with honor than to return with infamy,' went on, with such volunteers as would follow him, in a poor leaky cutter, up the sea now in commemoration of that adventure called Davis's Straits. He ascended 4° North of the furthest known point, among storms and icebergs, when the long days and twilight nights alone saved him from being destroyed, and, coasting back along the American shore, he discovered Hudson's Straits, supposed then to be the long-desired entrance into the Pacific. This exploit drew the attention of Walsingham, and by him Davis was presented to Burleigh, 'who was also pleased to show him great encouragement.' If either these statesmen or Elizabeth had been twenty years younger, his name would have filled a larger space in history than a small corner of the map of the world; but if he was employed at all in the last years of the century, no *vates sacer* has been found to celebrate his work, and no clue is left to guide us. He disappears; a cloud falls over him. He is known to have commanded trading vessels in the Eastern seas, and to have returned five times from India. But the details are all lost, and accident has only parted the clouds for a moment to show us the mournful setting with which he, too, went down upon the sea.

In taking out Sir Edward Michellthorne to India, in 1604, he fell in with a crew of Japanese, whose ship had been burnt, drifting at sea, without provisions, in a leaky junk. He supposed them to be pirates, but he did not choose to leave them to so wretched a death, and took them on board; and in a few hours, watching their opportunity, they murdered him.

As the fool dieth, so dieth the wise, and there no is difference; it was the chance of the sea, the ill reward of a humane action—a melancholy end for such a man—like the end of a

warrior, not dying Epaminondas-like on the field of victory, but cut off in some poor brawl or ambuscade. But so it was with all these men. They were cut off in the flower of their days, and few of them laid their bones in the sepulchres of their fathers. They knew the service which they had chosen, and they did not ask the wages for which they had not labored. Life with them was no summer holiday, but a holy sacrifice offered up to duty, and what their Master sent was welcome. Beautiful is old age—beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich glorious summer. In the old man, nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and, surrounded by his children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings. God forbid we should not call it beautiful. It is beautiful, but not the most beautiful. There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol; a battle which no peace follows, this side the grave; which the grave gapes to finish, before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this. They to whom it has been given to do the really highest work in this earth—whoever they are, Jew, or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, warriors, legislators, philosophers, priests, poets, kings, slaves—one and all, their fate has been the same—the same bitter cup has been given to them to drink. And so it was with the servants of England in the sixteenth century. Their life was a long battle, either with the elements or with men; and it was enough for them to fulfil their work, and to pass away in the hour when God had nothing more to bid them do.



They did not complain, and why should we complain for them? Peaceful life was not what they desired, and an honorable death had no terrors for them. Theirs was the old Grecian spirit, and the great heart of the Theban poet lived again in them :

Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα, τί κέ τις ἀνώνυμος  
γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἔψοι μάταν,  
ἀπάντων καλῶν ἄμμορος;

Seeing,' in Gilbert's own brave words, 'that death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue is immortal; wherefor in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno.*'

In the conclusion of these light sketches we pass into an element different from that in which we have been lately dwelling. The scenes in which Gilbert and Davis played out their high natures were of the kind which we call peaceful, and the enemies with which they contended were principally the ice and the wind, and the stormy seas and the dangers of unknown and savage lands. We shall close amidst the roar of cannon and the wrath and rage of battle. Hume, who alludes to the engagement which we are going to describe, speaks of it in a tone which shows that he looked at it as something portentous and prodigious; as a thing to wonder at—but scarcely as deserving the admiration which we pay to actions properly within the scope of humanity—and as if the energy which was displayed in it was like the unnatural strength of madness. He does not say this, but he appears to feel it; and he scarcely would have felt it if he had cared more deeply to saturate himself with the temper of the age of which he was writing. At the time, all England and all the world rang with the story. It struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people; it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than the destruction of the Armada itself; and in

the direct results which rose from it, it was scarcely less disastrous to them. Hardly, as it seems to us, if the most glorious actions which are set like jewels in the history of mankind are weighed one against the other in the balance, hardly will those 300 Spartans who in the summer morning sat 'combing their long hair for death' in the passes of Thermopylæ, have earned a more lofty estimate for themselves than this one crew of a modern Englishmen.

In August 1591, Lord Thomas Howard, with six English line-of-battle ships, six victuallers, and two or three pinnaces, was lying at anchor under the Island of Florez. Light in ballast and short of water, with half his men disabled by sickness, Howard was unable to pursue the aggressive purpose on which had been sent out. Several of the ships' crews were on shore: the ships themselves 'all pestered and rommaging,' with everything out of order. In this condition they were surprised by a Spanish fleet consisting of 53 men-of-war. Eleven out of the twelve English ships obeyed the signal of the admiral, to cut or weigh their anchors and escape as they might. The twelfth, the 'Revenge,' was unable for the moment to follow. Of her crew of 190, ninety were sick on shore, and, from the position of the ship, there was some delay and difficulty in getting them on board. The 'Revenge' was commanded by Sir Richard Grenville, of Bideford, a man well-known in the Spanish seas, and the terror of the Spanish sailors; so fierce he was said to be, that mythic stories passed from lip to lip about him, and, like Earl Talbot or Cœur de Lion, the nurses at the Azores frightened children with the sound of his name. 'He was of great revenues, of his own inheritance,' they said, 'but of unquiet mind, and greatly affected to wars;' and from his uncontrollable propensities for blood-eating, he had volunteered his services to the Queen; 'of so hard

a complexion was he, that I (John Huighen von Linschoten, who is our authority here, and who was with the Spanish fleet after the action) have been told by divers credible persons who stood and beheld him, that he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them in pieces and swallow them down.' Such Grenville was to the Spaniard. To the English he was a goodly and gallant gentleman, who had never turned his back upon an enemy, and was remarkable in that remarkable time for his constancy and daring. In this surprise at Florez he was in no haste to fly. He first saw all his sick on board and stowed away on the ballast; and then, with no more than 100 men left him to fight and work the ship, he deliberately weighed, uncertain, as it seemed at first, what he intended to do. The Spanish fleet were by this time on his weather bow, and he was persuaded (we here take his cousin Raleigh's beautiful narrative, and follow it in Raleigh's words) 'to cut his mainsail and cast about, and trust to the sailing of the ship: '—

But Sir Richard utterly refused to turn from the enemy, alledging that he would rather choose to die than to dishonor himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship, persuading his company that he would pass through their two squadrons in spite of them, and enforce those of Seville to give him way: which he performed upon diverse of the foremost, who, as the mariners term it, sprang their luff, and full under the lee of the *Revenge*. But the other course had been the better; and might right well have been answered in so great an impossibility of prevailing: notwithstanding, out of the greatness of his mind, he could not be persuaded.

The wind was light; the '*San Philip*,' 'a huge high-carged ship' of 1500 tons, came up to windward of him, and, taking the wind out of his sails, ran aboard him.

After the '*Revenge*' was entangled with the '*San Philip*,' four others boarded her, two on her larboard and two on her starboard. The fight thus beginning at

three o'clock in the afternoon continued very terrible all that evening. But the great 'San Philip,' having received the lower tier of the 'Revenge,' shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. The Spanish ships were filled with soldiers, in some 200, besides, the mariners, in some 500 in others 800. In ours there were none at all, beside, the mariners, but the servants of the commander and some few voluntary gentlemen only. After many exchanged volleys of great ordnance and small shot, the Spaniards deliberated to enter the 'Revenge,' and made divers attempts, hoping to force her by the multitude of their armed soldiers and musketeers; but were still repulsed again and again, and at all times beaten back into their own ship or into the sea. In the beginning of the fight the 'George Noble,' of London, having received some shot through her by the Armadas, fell under the lee of the 'Revenge,' and asked Sir Richard what he would command him; but being one of the victuallers, and of small force, Sir Richard bade him save himself and leave him to his fortune.

This last was a little touch of gallantry, which we should be glad to remember with the honor due to the brave English sailor who commanded the 'George Noble;' but his name has passed away, and his action is an *in memoriam*, on which time has effaced the writing. All that August night the fight continued, the stars rolling over in their sad majesty, but unseen through the sulphurous clouds which hung over the scene. Ship after ship of the Spaniards came on upon the 'Revenge,' 'so that never less than two mighty galleons were at her side and aboard her,' washing up like waves upon a rock, and falling foiled and shattered back amidst the roar of the artillery. Before morning fifteen several Armadas had assailed her, and all in vain; some had been sunk at her side; and the rest, 'so ill approving of their entertainment, that at break of day they were far more willing to hearken to a composition, than hastily to make more assaults or entries.' 'But as the day increased,' says Raleigh, 'so our men decreased; and as the light grew more and more, by so much the more grew our discomfort, for none appeared



in sight but enemies, save one small ship called the "Pilgrim," commanded by Jacob Whiddon, who hovered all night to see the success, but in the morning, bearing with the "Revenge," was hunted like a hare among many ravenous hounds—but escaped.'

All the powder in the 'Revenge' was now spent, all her pikes were broken, 40 out of her 100 men killed, and a great number of the rest wounded. Sir Richard, though badly hurt early in the battle, never forsook the deck till an hour before midnight; and was then shot through the body while his wounds were being dressed, and again in the head. His surgeon was killed while attending on him; the masts were lying over the side, the rigging cut or broken, the upper works all shot in pieces, and the ship herself, unable to move, was settling slowly in the sea; the vast fleet of Spaniards lying round her in a ring, like dogs round a dying lion, and wary of approaching him in his last agony. Sir Richard, seeing that it was past hope, having fought for fifteen hours, and 'having by estimation eight hundred shot of great artillery through him,' 'commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship, that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards; seeing in so many hours they were not able to take her, having had above fifteen hours' time, above ten thousand men, and fifty-three men-of-war to perform it withal; and persuaded the company, or as many as he could induce, to yield themselves unto God and to the mercy of none else; but as they had, like valiant resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should not now shorten the honor of their nation by prolonging their own lives for a few hours or a few days.

The gunner and a few others consented. But such *δαιμονική ἀρετή* was more than could be expected of ordinary seamen. They had dared do all which did become men, and they

were not more than men. Two Spanish ships had gone down, above 1500 of their crew were killed, and the Spanish admiral could not induce any one of the rest of his fleet to board the 'Revenge' again, 'doubting lest Sir Richard would have blown up himself and them, knowing his dangerous disposition.' Sir Richard lying disabled below, the captain, 'finding the Spaniards as ready to entertain a composition as they could be to offer it,' gained over the majority of the surviving company; and the remainder then drawing back from the master gunner, they all, without further consulting their dying commander, surrendered on honorable terms. If unequal to the English in action, the Spaniards were at least as courteous in victory. It is due to them to say, that the conditions were faithfully observed; and 'the ship being marvellous unsavourie,' Alonzo de Baçon, the Spanish admiral, sent his boat to bring Sir Richard on board his own vessel.

Sir Richard, whose life was fast ebbing away, replied that 'he might do with his body what he list, for that he esteemed it not;' and as he was carried out of the ship he swooned, and reviving again, desired the company to pray for him.

The admiral used him with all humanity, 'commending his valour and worthiness, being unto them a rare spectacle, and a resolution seldom approved.' The officers of the fleet, too, John Higgins tells us, crowded round to look at him; and a new fight had almost broken out between the Biscayans and the 'Portugals,' each claiming the honor of having boarded the 'Revenge.'

In a few hours Sir Richard, feeling his end approaching, showed not any sign of faintness, but spake these words in Spanish, and said, 'Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, queen, religion and honor. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall

always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.' When he had finished these or other such like words, he gave up the ghost with great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any signs of heaviness in him.

Such was the fight at Florez, in that August of 1591, without its equal in such of the annals of mankind as the thing which we call history has preserved to us; scarcely equalled by the most glorious fate which the imagination of Barrère could invent for the 'Vengeur.' Nor did the matter end without a sequel awful as itself. Sea battles have been often followed by storms, and without a miracle; but with a miracle, as the Spaniards and the English alike believed, or without one, as we moderns would prefer to believe, 'there ensued on this action a tempest so terrible as was never seen or heard the like before.' A fleet of merchantmen joined the Armada immediately after the battle, forming in all 140 sail; and of these 140, only 32 ever saw Spanish harbor. The rest foundered, or were lost on the Azores. The men-of-war had been so shattered by shot as to be unable to carry sail; and the 'Revenge' herself, disdained to survive her commander, or as if to complete his own last baffled purpose, like Samson, buried herself and her 200 prize crew under the rocks of St Michael's.

And it may well be thought and presumed (says John Huighen) that it was no other than a just plague purposely sent upon the Spaniards; and that it might be truly said, the taking of the 'Revenge' was justly revenged on them; and not by the might or force of man, but by the power of God. As some of them openly said in the Isle of Terceira, that they believed verily God would consume them, and that he took part with the Lutherans and heretics . . . saying further, that so soon as they had thrown the dead body of the Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Grenville overboard, they verily thought that as he had a devilish faith and religion, and therefore the devil loved him, so he presently sunk into the bottom of the sea and down into hell, where he raised up all the devils to the revenge of his death, and that

they brought so great a storm and torments upon the Spaniards, because they only maintained the Catholic and Romish religion. Such and the like blasphemies against God they ceased not openly to utter.



## HOMER.\*

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TROY fell before the Greeks ; and in its turn the war of Troy is now falling before the critics. That ten years' death-struggle, in which the immortals did not disdain to mingle—those massive warriors, with their grandeur and their chivalry, have, 'like an unsubstantial pageant, faded' before the wand of these modern enchanters ; and the Iliad and the Odyssey, and the other early legends, are discovered to be no more than the transparent myths of an old cosmogony, the arabesques and frescoes with which the imagination of the Ionian poets set off and ornamented the palace of the heavens, the struggle of the earth with the seasons, and the labors of the sun through his twelve signs.

Nay, with Homer himself it was likely at one time to have fared no better. His works, indeed, were indestructible, yet if they could not be destroyed, they might be disorganized ; and with their instinctive hatred of facts, the critics fastened on the historical existence of the poet. The origin of the poems was distributed among the clouds of pre-historic imagination ; and—instead of a single inspired Homer for their author, we were required to believe in some extraordinary spontaneous generation, or in some collective genius of an age which ignorance had personified.

But the person of a poet has been found more difficult of elimination than a mere fact

\* *Frazer's Magazine*, 1851,

of history. Facts, it was once said, were stubborn things; but in our days we have changed all that; a fact under the knife of a critic, splits in pieces, and is dissected out of belief with incredible readiness. The helpless thing lies under his hand like a foolish witness in a law court, when browbeaten by an unscrupulous advocate, and is turned about and twisted this way and that way, till in its distraction it contradicts itself, and bears witness against itself; and to escape from torture, at last flies utterly away, itself half doubting its own existence.

But it requires more cunning weapons to destroy a Homer; like his own immortals, he may be wounded, but he cannot have the life carved out of him by the prosaic strokes of common men. His poems have but to be disintegrated to unite again, so strong are they in the individuality of their genius. The singleness of their structure—the unity of design—the distinctness of drawing in the characters—the inimitable peculiarities of manner in each of them, seem to place beyond serious question, after the worst onslaught of the Wolfian critics, that both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, whether or not the work of the same mind, are at least each of them singly the work of one.

Let them leave us Homer, however, and on the rank and file of facts they may do their worst; we can be indifferent to, or even thankful for, what slaughter they may make. In the legends of the *Theogonia*, in that of Zeus and Cronus, for instance, there is evidently a metaphysical allegory; in the legends of Persephone, or of the *Dioscuri*, a physical one; in that of *Athene*, a profoundly philosophical one; and fused as the entire system was in the intensely poetical conception of the early thinkers, it would be impossible, even if it were desirable, at this time of day, to disentangle the fibres of all these various elements. Fact and theory, the natural, and the supernatural, the legendary and the philosophical, shade off so imper-

ceptibly one into the other, in the stories of the Olympians, or of their first offspring, that we can never assure ourselves that we are on historic ground, or that, antecedent to the really historic age, there is any such ground to be found anywhere. The old notion, that the heroes were deified men, is no longer tenable. With but few exceptions, we can trace their names as the names of the old gods of the Hellenic or Pelasgian races; and if they appeared later in human forms, they descended from Olympus to assume them. Diomed was the Cætolian sun-god; Achilles was worshipped in Thessaly long before he became the hero of the tale of Troy. The tragedy of the house of Atreus, and the bloody bath of Agamemnon, as we are now told with appearance of certainty,\* are humanized stories of the physical struggle of the opposing principles of life and death, light and darkness, night and day, winter and summer.

And let them be so; we need not be sorry to believe that there is no substantial basis for these tales of crime. The history of mankind is not so pure but that we can afford to lose a few dark pages out of the record. Let it be granted that of the times which Homer sung historically we know nothing literal at all—not any names of any kings, or of any ministers, wars, intrigues, revolutions, crimes. They are all gone—dead—passed away; their vacant chronicles may be silent as the tombs in which their bones are buried. Of such stuff as that with which historians fill their pages there is no trace; it is a blank, vacant as the annals of the Hottentot or of the Red Indian. Yet when all is said, there remain still to us in Homer's verse, materials richer, perhaps, than exist for any period of the ancient world, richer than even for the brilliant days of Pericles, or of the Cæsars, to construct a history of another kind—a history, a picture not of the times of

\* Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect*.

which he sang, but of the men among whom he lived. How they acted; how they thought, talked, and felt; what they made of this earth, and of their place in it; their private life and their public life; men and women; masters and servants; rich and poor—we have it all delineated in the marvellous verse of a poet who, be he what he may, was in this respect the greatest which the earth has ever seen. In extent, the information is little enough; but in the same sense as it has been said that an hour at an Athenian supper-party would teach us more Grecian life and character than all Aristophanes, Homer's pictures of life and manners are so living, so distinct, so palpable, that a whole prose encyclopædia of disconnected facts could give us nothing like them. It is the marvellous property of verse—one, if we rightly consider it, which would excuse any superstition on the origin of language—that the metrical and and rhythmic arrangement of syllable and sound is able to catch and express back to us, not stories of actions, but the actions themselves, with all the feelings which inspire them; to call up human action, and all other outward things in which human hearts take interest—to produce them, or to reproduce them, with a distinctness which shall produce the same emotions which they would themselves produce when really existing. The thing itself is made present before us by an exercise of creative power as genuine as that of Nature herself; which, perhaps, is but the same power manifesting itself at one time in words, at another in outward phenomena. Whatever be the cause, the fact is so. Poetry has this life-giving power, and prose has it not; and thus the poet is the truest historian. Whatever is properly valuable in history the poet gives us—not events and names, but emotion, but action, but life. He is the heart of his age, and his verse expresses his age; and what matter is it by what name he describes his places or his per-



sons? What matter is it what his own name was, while we have himself, and while we have the originals, from which he drew? The work and the life are all for which we need care, are all which can really interest us; the names are nothing. Though Phœacia was a dreamland, or a symbol of the Elysian fields, yet Homer drew his material, his island, his palaces, his harbor, his gardens of parrenial beauty, from those fair cities which lay along the shores of his own Ionia; and like his blind Demodocus, Homer doubtless himself sung those very hymns which now delight us so, in the halls of many a princely Alcinous.

The prose historian may give us facts and names; he may catalogue the successions, and tell us long stories of battles, and of factions, and of political intrigues; he may draw characters for us, of the sort which figure commonly in such features of human affairs, men of the unheroic, unpoetic kind—the Cleons, the Sejanuses, the Tiberiuses, a Philip the Second or a Louis Quatorze, in whom the noble element died out into selfishness and vulgarity. But great men—and all MEN properly so called (whatever is genuine and natural in them)—lie beyond prose, and can only be really represented by the poet. This is the reason why such men as Alexander, or as Cæsar, or as Cromwell, so perplex us in histories, because they and their actions are beyond the scope of the art through which we have looked at them. We compare the man as the historian represents him, with the track of his path through the world. The work is the work of a giant; the man, stripped of the vulgar appendages with which the stunted imagination of his biographer may have set him off, is full of meanesses and littlenesses, and is scarcely greater than one of ourselves. Prose, that is, has attempted something to which it is not equal. It describes a figure which it calls Cæsar; but it is not Cæsar, it is a monster. For

the same reason, prose fictions, novels, and the like, are worthless for more than a momentary purpose. The life which they are able to represent is not worth representing. There is no person so poor in his own eyes as not to gaze with pleasure into a looking-glass; and the prose age may value its own image in the novel. But the value of all such representations is ephemeral. It is with the poet's art as with the sculptor's—sandstone will not carve like marble, its texture is too loose to retain a sharply moulded outline. The actions of men, if they are true, noble, and genuine, are strong enough to bear the form and bear the polish of verse; if loose or feeble, they crumble away into the softer undulations of prose.

What the life was whose texture bore shaping into Homer's verse, we intend to spend these pages in examining. It is, of course, properly to be sought for in the poems themselves. But we shall here be concerned mainly with features which in the original are rather secondary than prominent, and which have to be collected out of fragments, here a line, and there a line, out of little hints, let fall by Homer as it were by accident. Things too familiar to his own hearers to require dwelling on, to us, whose object is to make out just those very things which were familiar, are of special and singular value. It is not an inquiry which will much profit us, if we come to it with any grand notions of the 'progress of the species,' for in many ways it will discourage the belief in progress.

We have fallen into ways of talking of the childhood and infancy of the race, as if no beards had grown on any face before the modern Reformation; and even people who know what old Athens was under Pericles, look commonly on earlier Greece as scarcely struggling out of its cradle. It would have fared so with all early history except for the Bible. The

Old Testament has operated partially to keep us in our modest senses, and we can see something grand about the patriarchs; but this is owing to exceptional causes, which do not apply to other literature; and in spite of our admiration of Homer's poetry, we regard his age, and the contemporary periods in the other people of the earth, as a kind of childhood little better than barbarism. We look upon it, at all events, as too far removed in every essential of spirit or of form from our own, to enable us to feel for it any strong interest or sympathy. More or less we have, every one of us, felt something of this kind. Homer's men are, at first sight, unlike any men that we have ever seen; and it is not without a shock of surprise that, for the first time, we fall, in reading him, across some little trait of humanity which in form as well as spirit is really identical with our own experience. Then, for the moment, all is changed with us—gleams of light flash out, in which the drapery becomes transparent, and we see the human form behind it, and that entire old world in the warm glow of flesh and blood. Such is the effect of those few child scenes of his, which throw us back into our old familiar childhood. With all these years between us, there is no difference between their children and ours, and child would meet child without sense of strangeness in common games and common pleasures.

The little Ulysses, climbing on the knees of his father's guest, coaxing for a taste of the red wine, and spilling it as he starts at the unusual taste; or that other most beautiful picture of him running at Laertes's side in the garden at Ithaca, the father teaching the boy the names of the fruit-trees, and making presents to him of this tree and of that tree for his very own, to help him to remember what they were called; the partition wall of three thousand years melts away as we look back at scenes like these; that broad, world-experienced man

was once, then, such a little creature as we remember ourselves, and Laertes a calm, kind father of the nineteenth century. Then, as now, the children loved to sport upon the shore, and watch the inrolling waves;—then as now, the boy-architect would pile the moist sand into mimic town or castle, and when the work was finished, sweep it away again in wanton humor with foot and hand;—then, as now, the little tired maiden would cling to her mother's skirt, and trotting painfully along beside her, look up wistfully and plead with moist eyes to be carried in her arms. Nay, and among the grown ones, where time has not changed the occupation, and the forms of culture have little room to vary, we meet again with very familiar faces. There is Melantho, the not over-modest tittering waiting-maid—saucy to her mistress and the old housekeeper—and always running after the handsome young princes. Unhappy Melantho, true child of universal nature! grievous work we should make with most households, if all who resemble thee were treated to as rough a destiny. And there are other old friends whom it is pleasant enough to recognize at so long a distance. 'Certain smooth-haired, sleek-faced fellows—insolent where their lords would permit them; inquisitive and pert, living but to eat and drink, and pilfering the good things, to convey them stealthily to their friends outside the castle wall.' The thing that hath been, that shall be again. When Homer wrote, the type had settled into its long-enduring form. 'Such are they,' he adds, in his good-natured irony, 'as the valet race ever love to be.'

With such evidence of identity among us all, it is worth while to look closer at the old Greeks, to try to find in Homer something beyond fine poetry, or exciting adventures or battle-scenes, or material for scholarship; for awhile to set all that aside, and look in him for the story of real living men—set to pilgrimize



in the old way on the same old earth—man such as we are, children of one family, with the same work to do, to live the best life they could, and to save their souls—with the same trials, the same passions, the same difficulties, if with weaker means of meeting them.

And first for their religion.

Let those who like it, lend their labor to the unravelling the secrets of the mythologies. Theogonies and Theologies are not religion; they are but its historic dress and outward or formal expression, which, like a language, may be intelligible to those who see the inward meaning in the sign, but no more than confused sound to us who live in another atmosphere, and have no means of transferring ourselves into the sentiment of an earlier era. It is not in these forms of a day or of an age that we should look for the real belief—the real feelings of the heart; but in the natural expressions which burst out spontaneously—expressions of opinion on Providence, on the relation of man to God, on the eternal laws by which this world is governed. Perhaps we misuse the word in speaking of religion; we ought rather to speak of piety: piety is always simple; the emotion is too vast, too overpowering, whenever it is genuine, to be nice or fantastic in its form; and leaving philosophies and cosmogonies to shape themselves in myth and legend, it speaks itself out with a calm and humble clearness. We may trifle with our own discoveries, and hand them over to the fancy or the imagination for elaborate decoration. We may shroud over supposed mysteries under an enigmatic veil, and adapt the degrees of initiation to the capacities of our pupils; but before the vast facts of God and Providence, the difference between man and man dwarfs into nothing. They are no discoveries of our own with which we can meddle, but revelations of the Infinite, which, like the sunlight, shed themselves on all alike, wise and

unwise, good and evil, and they claim and they permit no other acknowledgment from us than the simple obedience of our lives, and the plainest confession of our lips.

Such confessions, except in David's Psalms, we shall not anywhere find more natural or unaffected than in Homer—most definite, yet never elaborate—as far as may be from any complimenting of Providence, yet expressing the most unquestioning conviction. We shall not often remember them when we set about religion as a business ; but when the occasions of life stir the feelings in us on which religion itself reposes, if we were as familiar with the Iliad as with the Psalms, the words of the old Ionian singer would leap as naturally to our lips as those of the Israelite king.

Zeus is not always the questionable son of Cronus, nor the gods always the mythologic Olympians. Generally, it is true, they appear as a larger order of subject beings—beings like men, and subject to a higher control—in a position closely resembling that of Milton's angels, and liable like them to passion and to error. But at times, the father of gods and men is the Infinite and Eternal Ruler—the living Providence of the world—and the lesser gods are the immortal administrators of his Divine will throughout the lower creation. Forever at the head of the universe there is an awful spiritual power ; when Zeus appears with a distinct and positive personality, he is himself subordinate to an authority which elsewhere is one with himself. Wherever either he or the other gods are made susceptible of emotion, the Invisible is beyond and above them. When Zeus is the personal father of Sarpedon, and his private love conflicts with the law of the eternal order, though he has power to set aside the law, he dares not break it ; but in the midst of his immortality, and on his own awful throne, he weeps tears of blood in ineffectual sorrow for his dying child. And

again, there is a power supreme both over Zeus and over Poseidon, of which Iris reminds the latter, when she is sent to rebuke him for his disobedience to his brother. It is a law, she says, that the younger shall obey the elder, and the Erinnys will revenge its breach even on a god.

But descending from the more difficult Pantheon among mankind, the Divine law of justice is conceived as clearly as we in this day can conceive it. The supreme power is the same immortal love of justice and the same hater of iniquity; and justice means what we mean by justice, and iniquity what we mean by iniquity. There is no diffidence, no scepticism on this matter; the moral law is as sure as day and night, summer and winter. Thus in the sixteenth Iliad—

‘When in the market-place men deal unjustly, and the rulers decree crooked judgment, not regarding the fear of God,’ God sends the storm, and the earthquake, and the tempests, as the executors of his vengeance.

Again, Ulysses says—

‘God looks upon the children of men, and punishes the wrong doer.’

And Eumæus—

‘The gods love not violence and wrong; but the man whose ways are righteous, him they honor.’

Even when as mere Olympians they put off their celestial nature, and mix in earthly strife, and are thus laid open to earthly suffering, a mystery still hangs about them; Diomed, even while he crosses the path of Ares, feels all the while ‘that they are short-lived who contend with the Immortals.’ Ajax boasts that he will save himself in spite of heaven, and immediately the wave dashes him upon the rocks. One light word escaped Ulysses in the excitement of his escape from the Cyclops which nine years of suffering hardly expiated.

The same spirit which teaches Christians

that those who have no earthly friend have specially a friend above to care for and to avenge them, taught the Ionians a proverb which appears again and again in Homer, that the stranger and the poor man are the patrimony of God ; and it taught them, also, that sometimes men entertained the immortals unawares. It was a faith, too, which was more than words with them ; for we hear of no vagrant acts or alien acts, and it was sacrilege to turn away from the gate whoever asked its hospitality. Times are changed. The world was not so crowded as it is now, and perhaps rogues were less abundant ; but at any rate those antique Greeks did what they said. We say what they said, while in the same breath we say, too, that it is impossible to do it.

In every way, the dependence of man on a special heavenly Providence was a matter of sure and certain conviction with them. Telemachus appeals to the belief in the Council at Ithaca. He questions it at Pylos, and is at once rebuked by Athene. Both in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to live justly is the steady service which the gods require, and their favor as surely follows when that service is paid, as a Nemesis sooner or later follows surely, too, on the evil-doers.

But without multiplying evidence, as we easily might, from every part of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the sceptical and the believing forms of thought and feeling on this very subject are made points of dramatic contrast, to show off the opposition of two separate characters ; and this is clear proof that such thoughts and feelings must have been familiar to Homer's hearers : if it were not so, his characters would have been without interest to his age—they would have been individual, and not universal ; and no expenditure of intellect, or passion, would have made men care to listen to him. The two persons who throughout the *Iliad* stand out in relief in contrast to each other are



of course, Hector and Achilles; and faith in God (as distinct from a mere recognition of him) is as directly the characteristic of Hector as in Achilles it is entirely absent. Both characters are heroic, but the heroism in them springs from opposite sources. Both are heroic, because both are strong; but the strength of one is in himself, and the strength of the other is in his faith. Hector is a patriot; Achilles does not know what patriotism means;—Hector is full of tenderness and human affection; Achilles is self-enveloped. Even his love for Patroclus is not pure, for Patroclus is as the moon to the sun of Achilles, and Achilles sees his own glory reflected on his friend. They have both a forecast of their fate; but Hector, in his great brave way, scoffs at omens; he knows that there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, and defies augury. To do his duty is the only omen for which Hector cares; and if death must be, he can welcome it like a gallant man, if it find him fighting for his country. Achilles is moody, speculative, and subjective; he is too proud to attempt an ineffectual resistance to what he knows to be inevitable, but he alternately murmurs at it and scorns it. Till his passion is stirred by his friend's death, he seems equally to disdain the greatness of life and the littleness of it; the glories of a hero are not worth dying for; and like Solomon, and almost in Solomon's words, he complains that there is one event to all—

*Ἐν δὲ ἰγ τιμῇ ἣ μὲν κακὸς ἦε καὶ ἐσθλός.*

To gratify his own spleen, he will accept an inglorious age in Thessaly, in exchange for a hero immortality; as again in the end it is but to gratify his own wounded pride that he goes out to brave a fate which he scorns while he knows that it will subdue him. Thus, Achilles is the hero of the stern human, self-sufficing spirit, which does not deny or question destiny,

but seeing nothing in it except a cold, iron law, meets force with force, and holds up against it an unbroken, unbending will. Human nature is at its best but a miserable business to him; death and sorrow are its inevitable lot. As a brave man, he will not fear such things, but he will not pretend to regard them as anything but detestable; and he comforts the old, weeping king of Troy, whose age he was himself bringing down to the grave in sorrow, with philosophic meditations on the vanity of all things, and a picture of Zeus mixing the elements of life out of the two urns of good and evil.

Turn to Hector, and we pass from shadow into sunlight. Achilles is all self, Hector all self-forgetfulness; Achilles all pride, Hector all modesty. The confidence of Achilles is in himself and in his own arm; Hector knows (and the strongest expressions of the kind in all the Iliad are placed pointedly in Hector's mouth) that there is no strength except from above. 'God's will,' he says, 'is over all; he makes the strong man to fear, and gives the victory to the weak, if it shall please him. And at last when he meets Achilles, he answers his bitter words, not with a defiance, but calmly saying, 'I know that thou art mighty, and that my strength is far less than thine; but these things lie in the will of the gods, and I, though weaker far than thou, may yet take thy life from thee, if the Immortals choose to have it so.'

So far then, on the general fact of Divine Providence the feeling of Homer, and therefore of his countrymen, is distinct. Both the great poems bearing his name speak in the same language. But beyond the general fact, many questions rise in the application of the creed, and on one of these (it is among several remarkable differences which seem to make the Odyssey as of a later age) there is a very singular discrepancy. In the Iliad, the life of a

man on this side the grave is enough for the completion of his destiny—for his reward, if he lives nobly; for his punishment if he be base or wicked. Without repinings or scepticisms at the apparent successes of bad men, the poet is contented with what he finds accepting cheerfully the facts of life as they are; it never seems to occur to him as seriously possible that a bad man could succeed or a good one fail; and as the ways of Providence, therefore, required no vindicating, neither his imagination nor his curiosity tempts him into penetrating the future. The house of Hades is the long home to which men go when dismissed out of their bodies; but it is a dim, shadowy place, of which we see nothing, and concerning which no conjectures are ventured. Achilles, in his passion over Patroclus, cries out, that although the dead forget the dead in the halls of the departed, yet that he will remember his friend; and through the *Iliad* there is nothing clearer than these vague words to show with what hopes or fears the poet looked forward to death. So far, therefore, his faith may seem imperfect; yet perhaps, not the less noble because imperfect; religious men in general are too well contented with the promise of a future life, as of a scene where the seeming shortcomings of the Divine administration will be carried out with larger equity. But whether imperfect or not, or whatever be the account of the omission, the theory of Hades in the *Odyssey* is developed into far greater distinctness; the future is still, indeed shadowy, but it is no longer uncertain; there is a dreadful prison-house, with the Judge upon his throne—and the darker criminals are overtaken by the vengeance which was delayed in life. The thin phantoms of the great ones of the past flit to and fro, mourning wearily for their lost mortality, and feeding on its memory. And more than this, as if it were beginning to be felt that something more was wanted

after all to satisfy us with the completeness of the Divine rule, we have a glimpse—it is but one, but it is like a ray of sunshine falling in upon the darkness of the grave—‘of the far-off Elysian fields where dwells Rhadamanthus with the golden hair, where life is ever sweet, and sorrow is not, nor winter, nor any rain or storm, and the never-dying zephyrs blow soft and cool from off the ocean.’

However vague the filling up of such a picture, the outline is correct to the best which has been revealed even in Christianity, and it speaks nobly for the people among whom, even in germ, such ideas could root themselves. But think what we will of their notions of the future, the old Greek faith, considered as a practical and not a theological system, is truly admirable, clear, rational, and moral ; if it does not profess to deal with the mysteries of evil in the heart, it is prompt and stern with them in their darker outward manifestations, and, as far as it goes, as a guide in the common daily business of life, it scarcely leaves anything unsaid.

How far it went we shall see in the details of the life itself, the most important of which in the eyes of a modern will be the social organization ; and when he looks for organization, he will be at once at a loss, for he will find the fact of government yet without defined form ;—he will find law, but without a public sword to enforce it ; and a ‘social machine’ moving without friction under the easy control of opinion. There are no wars of classes, no politics, no opposition of interests, a sacred feeling of the will of the gods keeping every one in his proper subordination. It was a sacred duty that the younger should obey the elder, that the servant should obey his master, that property should be respected ; in war, that the leader should be obeyed without questioning ; in peace, that public questions should be brought before the assembly of the people,



and settled quietly as the Council determined. In this assembly the prince presided, and beyond this presidency his authority at home does not seem to have extended. Of course there was no millennium in Ionia, and men's passions were pretty much what they are now. Without any organized means of repressing crime when it did appear, the people were exposed to, and often suffered under, extreme forms of violence—violence such as that of the suitors at Ithaca, or of Ægisthus at Argos. On the other hand, what a state of cultivation it implies, what peace and comfort in all classes, when society could hold together for a day with no more complete defence ! And, moreover, there are disadvantages in elaborate police systems. Self-reliance is one of the highest virtues in which this world is intended to discipline us ; and to depend upon ourselves even for our own personal safety is a large element in moral training.

But not to dwell on this, and to pass to the way in which the men of those days employed themselves.

Our first boy's feeling with the Iliad is, that Homer is pre-eminently a poet of war ; that battles were his own passion, and tales of battles the delight of his listeners. His heroes appear like a great fighting aristocracy, such as the after Spartans were, Homer himself like another Tyrtæus, and the poorer occupations of life too menial for their notice or for his. They seem to live for glory—the one glory worth caring for only to be won upon the battlefield, and their exploits the one worthy theme of the poet's song. This is our boyish impression, and like other such, it is very different from the truth. If war had been a passion with the Ionians, as it was with the Teutons and the Norsemen, the god of battles would have been supreme in the Pantheon ; and Zeus would scarcely have called Ares the most hateful spirit in Olympus—most hateful, *be-*

*cause* of his delight in war and carnage. Mr. Carlyle looks forward to a chivalry of labor. He rather wishes than expects that a time may come when the campaign of industry against anarchic nature may gather into it those feelings of gallantry and nobleness which have found their vent hitherto in fighting only. The modern man's work, Mr. Carlyle says, is no longer to splinter lances or break down walls, but to break soil, to build barns and factories, and to find a high employment for himself in what hitherto has been despised as degrading. How to elevate labor—how to make it beautiful—how to enlist the *spirit* in it (for in no other way can it be made humanly profitable). that is the problem which he looks wistfully to the future to solve for us. He may look to the past as well as to the future; in the old Ionia he will find all for which he wishes. The wise Ulysses built his own house, and carved his own bed. Princes killed and cooked their own food, It was a holy work with them—their way of saying grace for it; for they offered the animal in his death to the gods, and they were not butchers, but sacrificing priests. Even a keeper of swine is called noble, and fights like a hero; and the young princess of Phœcia—the loveliest and gracefullest of Homer's women—drove the clothes-cart and washed linen with her own beautiful hands. Not only was labor free—for so it was among the early Romans; or honorable, so it was among the Israelites,—but it was beautiful—beautiful in the artist's sense, as perhaps elsewhere it has never been. In later Greece—in what we call the glorious period—toil had gathered about it its modern crust of supposed baseness—it was left to slaves; and wise men, in their philosophic lecture-room, spoke of it as unworthy of the higher specimens of cultivated humanity.

But Homer finds, in its most homely forms, fit illustrations for the most glorious achieve-

ments of his heroes ; and in every page we find in simile or metaphor, some common scene of daily life worked out with elaborate beauty. What the popular poet chooses for his illustrations are as good a measure as we can have of the popular feeling, and the images which he suggests are, of course, what he knows his hearers will be pleased to dwell upon. There is much to be said about this, and we shall return to it presently ; in the mean time, we must not build on indirect evidence. The designs on the shield of Achilles are, together, a complete picture of Homer's microcosm, Homer surely never thought inglorious or ignoble what the immortal art of Hephaistos condescended to imitate.

The first groups of figures point a contrast which is obviously intentional ; and the significance becomes sadly earnest when we remember who it was that was to bear the shield. The moral is a very modern one, and the picture might be called by the modern name of Peace and War. There are two cities, embodying in their condition the two ideas. In one, a happy wedding is going forward ; the pomp of the hymeneal procession is passing along the streets ; the air is full of music, and the women are standing at their doors to gaze. The other is in the terrors of a siege ; the hostile armies glitter under the walls, the women and children press into the defences, and crowd to the battlements. In the first city a quarrel rises, and wrong is made right, not by violence and fresh wrong, but by the majesty of law and order. The heads of the families are sitting gravely in the market-place, the cause is heard, the compensation set, the claim awarded. Under the walls of the other city an ambush lies, like a wild beast on the watch for its prey. The unsuspecting herdsmen pass on with their flocks to the waterside ; the spoilers spring from their hiding-place, and all is strife, and death, and horror, and confusion. If

there were other war scenes on the shield, it might be doubted whether Homer intended so strong a contrast as he executed; but fighting for its own sake was evidently held in slight respect with him. The forms of life which he thought really beautiful follow in a series of exquisite Rubens-like pictures: harvest scenes and village festivals, the ploughing and the vintage, or the lion-hunt on the reedy margin of the river; and he describes them with a serene, sunny enjoyment which no other old world art or poetry gives us anything in the least resembling. Even we ourselves, in our own pastorals, are struggling with but half success, after what Homer entirely possessed. What a majesty he has thrown into his harvest scene! The yellow corn falling, the boys following to gather up the large armsfull as they drop behind the reapers; in the distance a banquet preparing under the trees; in the centre, in the midst of his workmen, the king sitting in mellow silence, sceptre in hand, looking on with gladdened heart. Again we see the ploughman, unlike what are to be seen in our corn-grounds, turning their teams at the end of the furrow, and attendants standing ready with the winecup, to hand to them as they pass. Homer had seen these things, or he would not have sung of them; and princes and nobles might have shared such labor without shame, when kings presided over it, and and gods designed it, and the divine Achilles bore its image among his insignia in the field.

Analogous to this, and as part of the same feeling, is that intense enjoyment of natural scenery, so keen in Homer, and of which the Athenian poets show not a trace; as, for instance, in that night landscape by the sea, finished off in a few lines only, but so exquisitely perfect! The broad moon, gleaming through the mist as it parts suddenly from off the sky; the crags and headlands, and soft



wooded slopes, shining out in the silver light; and earth and sea transformed into fairy land.

We spoke of Homer's similes as illustrative of the Ionic feeling about war. War, of course, was glorious to him—but war in a glorious cause. Wars there were—wars in plenty, as there have been since, and as it is like there will be for some time to come; and a just war, of all human employments, is the one which most calls out whatever nobleness there is in man. It was the thing itself, the actual fighting and killing, as apart from the heroism for which it makes opportunities, for which we said that he showed no taste. His manner shows that he felt like a cultivated man, and not like a savage. His spirit stirs in him as he goes out with his hero to the battle; but there is no drunken delight in blood; we never hear of warriors as in that grim Hall of the Nibelungen, quenching their thirst in the red stream; never anything of that fierce exultation in carnage with which the war poetry of so many nations, late and old is crimsoned. Everything, on the contrary, is contrived so as to soften the merely horrible, and fix our interest only on what is grand or beautiful. We are never left to dwell long together on scenes of death, and when the battle is at its fiercest, our minds are called off by the rapid introduction (either by simile or some softer turn of human feeling) of other associations, not contrived as an inferior artist would contrive, to deepen our emotions, but to soften and relieve them.

Two warriors meet, and exchange their high words of defiance; we hear the grinding of the spear-head, as it pierces shield and breast-plate, and the crash of the armor, as this or that hero falls. But at once, instead of being left at his side to see him bleed, we are summoned away to the soft water meadow, the lazy river, the tall poplar, now waving its branches against the sky, now lying its length along in the grass

beside the water, and the wood-cutter with peaceful industry laboring and lopping at it. In the thick of the universal *melée*, when the stones and arrows are raining on the combatants, and some furious hailstorm is the slightest illustration with which we should expect him to heighten the effect of the human tempest, so sure Homer is that he has painted the thing itself in its own intense reality, that his simile is the stillest phenomenon in all nature—a stillness of activity, infinitely expressive of the density of the shower of missiles, yet falling like oil on water on the ruffled picture of the battle; the snow descending in the *still* air, covering first hills, then plains and fields and farmsteads; covering the rocks down to the very water's edge, and clogging the waves as they roll in. Again in that fearful death-wrestle at the Grecian wall, when gates and battlements are sprinkled over with blood, and neither Greeks nor Trojans can force their way against the other, we have, first, as an image of the fight itself, two men in the field, with measuring rods, disputing over a land boundary; and for the equipoise of the two armies, the softest of all home scenes, a poor working woman weighing out her wool, before weaving it, to earn a scanty subsistence for herself and for her children.

Of course the similes are not all of this kind; it would be monotonous if they were; but they occur often enough to mark their meaning. In the direct narrative, too, we see the same tendency. Sarpedon struck through the thigh is borne off the field, the long spear trailing from the wound, and there is too much haste to draw it out. Hector flies past him and has no time to speak; all is dust, hurry, and confusion. Even Homer can only pause for a moment, but in three lines he lays the wounded hero under a tree, he brings a dear friend to his side, and we refresh ourselves in a beautiful scene, when the lance is taken out and

Sarpedon faints, and comes slowly back to life, with the cool air fanning him. We may look in vain through the *Nibelungen Lied* for anything like this. 'The Swabian poet can be tender before the battle, but in the battle itself his barbaric nature is too strong for him, and he scents nothing but blood. In the *Iliad*, on the contrary, the very battles of the gods, grand and awful as they are, relieve rather than increase the human horror. In the magnificent scene, where Achilles, weary with slaughter, pauses on the bank of the Scamander, and the angry river god, whose course is checked by the bodies of the slain, swells up to revenge them and destroy him, the natural and the supernatural are so strangely blended, that when Poseidon lights the forest, and god meets god and element meets element, the convulsion is too tremendous to enhance the fierceness of Achilles; it concentrates the interest on itself, and Achilles and Hector, flying Trojan and pursuing Greek, for the time melt out and are forgotten.

We do not forget that there is nothing of this kind, no relief, no softening, in the great scene at the conclusion of the *Odyssey*. All is stern enough and terrible enough there; more terrible, if possible, because more distinct, than its modern counterpart in *Criemhildas Hall*. But there is an obvious reason for this, and it does not make against what we have been saying. It does not delight in slaughter, but it is the stern justice of revenge which we have here; not, as in the *Iliad*, hero meeting hero, but the long crime receiving at last its Divine punishment; the breaking of the one storm, which from the beginning has been slowly and awfully gathering.

With Homer's treatment of a battle-field, and as illustrating the conclusion which we argue from it, we are attempted to draw parallels from two modern poets—one a German, who was taken away in the morning of his life; the

other, the most gifted of modern Englishmen. Each of those two has attempted the same subject, and the treatment in each case embodies, in a similar manner, modern ways of thinking about it.

The first is from the 'Albigenses' of young Lenau, who has since died lunatic, we have heard, as he was not unlikely to have died with such thoughts in him. It is the eve which followed one of those terrible struggles at Toulouse, and the poet's imagination is hanging at moon-rise over the scene, 'The low broad field scattered over thick with corpses, all silent, dead,—the last sob spent,'—the priest's thanksgiving for the Catholic victory having died into an echo, and only the 'vultures carving their Te Deum Laudamus.'

Hat Gott de Herr den Körperstoff erschaffen,  
Ha ihn hepvorgebracht ein böser Geist,  
Darüber stritten sie mit allen Waffen  
Und werden von den Vögeln nun gespiest,  
Die, ohne ihren Ursprung nachzufragen,  
Die Körper da sich lassen wohl behagen.

'Was it God the Lord who formed the substance of their bodies? or did some evil spirit bring it forth? It was for this with all their might they fought, and now they are devoured there by the wild birds, who sit gorging merrily over their carrion, *without asking from whence it came.*'

In Homer, as we saw, the true hero is master over death—death has no terror for him. He meets it, if it is to be, calmly and proudly, and then it is over; whatever offensive may follow after it, is concealed, or at least passed lightly over. Here, on the contrary, everything most offensive is dwelt upon with an agonizing intensity, and the triumph of death is made to extend, not over the body only, but over the soul, whose heroism it turns to mockery. The cause in which a man dies, is what can make his death beautiful; but here nature herself, in



her stern, awful way, is reading her sentence over the cause itself as a wild and frantic dream. We ought to be revolted—doubly revolted, one would think, and yet we are not so; instead of being revolted, we were affected with a sense of vast, sad magnificence. Why is this? Because we lose sight of the scene or lose the sense of its horror, in the confusion of the spirit. It is the true modern tragedy; the note which sounds through Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,' through 'Hamlet,' through 'Faust.' All the deeper trials of the modern heart might be gathered out of those few lines; the sense of wasted nobleness—nobleness spending its energies upon what time seems to be pronouncing no better than a dream—at any rate, misgivings, sceptic and distracting; yet the heart the while, in spite of the uncertainty of the issue, remaining true to itself. If the spirit of the Albigensian warriors had really broken down, or if the poet had pointed his lesson so as to say, Truth is a lie; faith is folly; eat, drink, and die,—then his picture would have been revolting; but the noble spirit remains, though it is borne down and trifled with by destiny, and therefore it is not revolting but tragic.

Far different from this—as far inferior in tone to Lenau's lines, as it exceeds them in beauty of workmanship—is the well-known picture of the scene under the wall in the Siege of Corinth:

He saw the lean dogs beneath the wall  
Hold o'er the dead their carnival;  
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;  
They were too busy to bark at him!  
From a Tartar's skul they had stripp'd the flesh,  
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;  
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,  
As it slipp'd through their jaws when their edge grew  
dull,  
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,  
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they  
fed;  
So well they had broken a lingering fast  
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.

And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,  
The foremost of these were the best of his band :

. . . . .  
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,  
The hair was tangled round his jaw.  
Close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,  
There sate a vulture flapping a wolf,  
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,  
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;  
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,  
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

For a parallel to the horribleness of this wonderfully painted scene we need not go to the Nibelungen, for we shall find nothing like it there : we must go back to the carved slabs which adorned the banquet halls of the Assyrian kings, where the foul birds hover over the stricken fields, and trail from their talons the entrails of the slain.

And for what purpose does Byron introduce these frightful images ? Was it in contrast to the exquisite moonlight which tempts the renegade out of his tent ? Was it to bring his mind into a fit condition to be worked upon by the vision of Francesca ? It does but mar and untune the softening influence of nature, which might have been rendered more powerful, perhaps, by some slight touch to remind him of his past day's work, but are blotted out and paralyzed by such a mass of horrors.

To go back to Homer.

We must omit for the present any notice of the domestic pictures, of which there are so many, in the palaces of Ulysses, of Nestor, or of Alcinous ; of the games, so manly, yet, in point of refinement, so superior even to those of our own middle ages ; of the supreme good of life as the Greeks conceived it, and of the arts by which they endeavored to realize that good. It is useless to notice such things briefly, and the detail would expand into a volume. But the impression which we gather from them is the same which we have gathered all along—

that if the proper aim of all human culture be to combine, in the highest measure in which they are compatible, the two elements of refinement and of manliness, then Homer's age was cultivated to a degree the like of which the earth has not witnessed since. There is more refinement under Pericles, as there is more in modern London and Paris; but there was, and there is, infinitely more vice. There was more fierceness (greater manliness there never was) in the times of feudalism. But take it for all in all, and in a mere human sense, apart from any other aspect of the world which is involved in Christianity, it is difficult to point to a time when life in general was happier, and the character of man set in a more noble form. If we have drawn the picture with too little shadow, let it be allowed for. The shadow was there, doubtless, though we see it only in a few dark spots. The Margites would have supplied the rest, but the Margites, unhappily for us, is lost. Even heroes have their littlenesses, and Comedy is truer to the details of littleness than Tragedy or Epic. The grand is always more or less ideal, and the elevation of a moment is sublimed into the spirit of a life. Comedy, therefore, is essential for the representing of men; and there were times, doubtless, when the complexion of Agamemnon's greatness was discolored, like Prince Henry's, by remembering, when he was weary, that poor creature—small beer—*i. e.* if the Greeks had got any.

A more serious discoloration, however, we are obliged to say that we find in Homer himself, in the soil or taint which even he is obliged to cast over the position of women. In the *Iliad*, where there is no sign of male slavery, women had already fallen under the chain, and though there does not seem to have been any practice of polygamy, the female prisoners fell, as a matter of course, into a more degraded position. It is painful, too, to observe that

their own feelings followed the practice of the times, and that they composed themselves to bear without reluctance whatever their destiny forced upon them. When Priam ventured into the Grecian camp for Hector's body, and stood under the roof of Achilles, he endured to do what, as he says, no mortal father had ever yet endured—to give his hand to his son's destroyer. Briseis, whose bed was made desolate by the hand of the same Achilles, finds it her one greatest consolation, that the conqueror stoops to choose her to share his own. And when Hector in his last parting scene anticipates a like fate for his own Andromache, it is not with the revolted agony of horror with which such a possible future would be regarded by a modern husband; nor does Andromache, however bitterly she feels the danger, protest, as a modern wife would do, that there was no fear for her—that death by sorrow's hand, or by her own, would preserve her to rejoin him.

Nor, again, was unfaithfulness, of however long duration, conclusively fatal against a wife; for we meet Helen, after a twenty years' elopement, again the quiet, hospitable mistress in the Spartan palace, entertaining her husband's guests with an easy matronly dignity, and not afraid even in Menelaus's presence to allude to the past—in strong terms of self-reproach, indeed, but with nothing like despairing prostration. Making the worst of this, however, yet even in this respect the Homeric Greeks were better than their contemporaries in Palestine; and on the whole there was, perhaps, no time anterior to Christianity when women held a higher place, or the relation between wife and husband was of a more free and honorable kind.

For we have given but one side of the picture. When a woman can be the theme of a poet, her nature cannot be held in slight esteem; and there is no doubt that Penelope is Homer's heroine in the *Odyssey*. One design, at least,



which Homer had before him was to vindicate the character of the virtuous matron against the stain which Clytemnestra had inflicted on it. Clytemnestra has every advantage, Penelope every difficulty: the trial of the former lasted only half as long as that of the latter. Agamemnon in leaving her gave herself and his house in charge of a divine *αοιδός*, a heaven-inspired prophet, who should stand between her and temptation, and whom she had to murder before her passion could have its way. Penelope had to bear up alone for twenty weary years, without a friend, without a counsellor, and with even a child whose constancy was wavering. It is obvious that Homer designed this contrast. The story of the Argos tragedy is told again and again. The shade of Agamemnon himself forebodes a fate like his own to Ulysses. It is Ulysses's first thought when he wakes from his sleep to find himself in his own land; and the scene in Hades, in the last book, seems only introduced that the husband of Clytemnestra may meet the shades of the Ithacan suitors, and learn, in their own tale of the sad issue of their wooing, how far otherwise it had fared with Ulysses than with himself. Women, therefore, according to Homer, were as capable of heroic virtue as men were, and the ideal of this heroism is one to which we have scarcely added.

For the rest, there is no trace of any oriental seraglio system. The sexes lived together in easy unaffected intercourse. The ladies appeared in society naturally and gracefully, and their chief occupations were household matters, care of clothes and linen, and other domestic arrangements. When a guest came, they prepared his dressing-room, settled the bath, and laid out the conveniences of his toilet-table. In their leisure hours, they were to be found, as now, in the hall or the saloon, and their work-table contained pretty much the same materials. Helen was winding worsted as she

entertained Telemachus, and Andromache worked roses in very modern cross-stitch. A literalist like Mr. Mackay, who finds that the Israelites were cannibals, from such expressions as 'drinking the blood of the slain,' might discover, perhaps, a similar unpleasant propensity in an excited wish of Hecuba, that she might eat the heart of Achilles; but in the absence of other evidence, it is unwise in either case to press a metaphor; and the food of ladies, wherever Homer lets us see it, is very innocent cake and wine, with such fruits as were in season. To judge by Nausicaa, their breeding must have been exquisite. Nausicaa standing still, when the uncouth figure of Ulysses emerged from under the wood, all sea-slime and nakedness, and only covered with a girdle of leaves—standing still to meet him when the other girls ran away tittering and terrified, is the perfect conception of true female modesty; and in the whole scene between them, Homer shows the most finished understanding of the delicate and tremulous relations which occur occasionally in the accidents of intercourse between highly cultivated men and women, and which he could only have learnt by living in a society where men and women met and felt in the way which he has described.

Who, then, was Homer? What was he? When did he live? History has absolutely nothing to answer. His poems were not written; for the art of writing (at any rate for a poet's purpose) was unknown to him. There is a vague tradition that the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, and a comic poem called the *Margites*, were composed by an Ionian whose name was Homer, about four hundred years before Herodotus, or in the ninth century B.C. We know certainly that these poems were preserved by the Rhapsodists or popular reciters, who repeated them at private parties or festivals, until writing came into use, and they were fixed in a less precarious form. A later story was

current, that we owe the collection to Pisistratus; but an exclusive claim for him was probably only Athenian conceit. It is incredible that men of genius in Homer's own land—Alcæus, for instance—should have left such a work to be done by a foreigner. But this is really all which is known; and the creation of the poems lies in impenetrable mystery. Nothing remains to guide us, therefore, except internal evidence (strangely enough, it is the same with Shakespeare), and it has led to wild conclusions; yet the wildest is not without its use; it has commonly something to rest upon; and internal evidence is only really valuable when outward testimony has been sifted to the uttermost. The present opinion seems to be, that each poem is unquestionably the work of one man; but whether both poems are the work of the same is yet *sub-judice*. The Greeks believed they were; and that is much. There are remarkable points of resemblance in style, yet not greater than the resemblances in the 'Two Noble Kinsmen' and in the 'Yorkshire Tragedy' to 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet;' and there are more remarkable points of non-resemblance, which deepen upon us the more we read. On the other hand, tradition is absolute. If the style of the Odyssey is sometimes unlike the Iliad, so is one part of the Iliad sometimes unlike another. It is hard to conceive a genius equal to the creation of either Iliad or Odyssey to have existed without leaving so much as a legend of his name; and the difficulty of criticising style accurately in an old language will be appreciated by those who have tried their hand in their own language with the disputed plays of Shakespeare. There are heavy difficulties every way; and we shall best conclude our own subject by noting down briefly the most striking points of variation of which as yet no explanation has been attempted. We have already noticed several: the non-appearance of male slavery in the Iliad which is com-

mon in the *Odyssey*; the notion of a future state; and perhaps a fuller cultivation in the female character. Andromache is as delicate as Nausicaa, but she is not as grand as Penelope; and in marked contrast to the feeling expressed by Briseis, is the passage where the grief of Ulysses over the song of Demodocus is compared to the grief of a young wife flinging herself on the yet warm body of her husband, and looking forward to her impending slavery with feelings of horror and repulsion. But these are among the slightest points in which the two poems are dissimilar. Not only are there slaves in the *Odyssey*, but there are *θήτες*, or serfs, an order with which we are familiar in later times, but which again are not in the *Iliad*. In the *Odyssey* the Trojans are called *ἐπιβήτορες ἵππων*, which must mean *riders*. In the *Iliad*, horses are never ridden; they are always in harness.

Wherever in the *Odyssey* the Trojan war is alluded to (and it is very often), in no one case is the allusion to anything which is mentioned in the *Iliad*. We hear of the wooden horse, the taking of Troy, the death of Achilles, the contention of Ulysses with Ajax for his arms. it might be said that the poet wished to supply afterwards indirectly what he had left in the *Iliad* untold; but again, this is impossible, for a very curious reason. The *Iliad* opens with the wrath of Achilles, which caused such bitter woe to the Achaians. In the *Odyssey* it is still the wrath of Achilles; but singularly *not with Agamemnon, but with Ulysses*. Ulysses to the author of the *Odyssey* was a far grander person at *Troy* than he appears in the *Iliad*. In the latter poem he is great, but far from one of the greatest; in the other, he is evidently the next to Achilles; and it seems almost certain that whoever wrote the *Odyssey* was working from some other legend of the war. There were a thousand versions of it. The tale of Ilium was set to every lyre in Greece,



and the relative position of the heroes was doubtless varied according to the sympathies or the patriotism of the singer. The character of Ulysses is much stronger in the *Odyssey*; and even when the same qualities are attributed to him—his soft-flowing tongue, his cunning, and his eloquence—they are held in very different estimation. The Homer of the *Iliad* has little liking for a talker. Thersites is his pattern specimen of such; and it is the current scoff at unready warriors to praise their father's courage, and then to add—

*ἀλλὰ τὸν νῖδον  
γείνατο εἰς χέρη μάχη, ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνω.*

But the Phœacian Lord who ventured to reflect, in the *Iliad* style, on the supposed unreadiness of Ulysses, is taught a different notion of human excellence. Ulysses tells him that he is a fool. 'The gods,' Ulysses says, 'do not give all good things to all men, and often a man is made unfair to look upon, but over his ill favor they fling, like a garland, a power of lovely speech, and the people delight to *look* on him. He speaks with modest dignity, and he shines among the multitude. As he walks through the city, men gaze on him as on a god.'

Differences like these, however, are far from decisive. The very slightest external evidence would weigh them all down together. Perhaps the following may be of more importance:—

In both poems there are 'questionings of destiny,' as the modern phrase goes. The thing which we call human life is looked in the face—this little checkered island of lights and shadows, in the middle of an ocean of darkness; and in each we see the sort of answer which the poet finds for himself, and which might be summed up briefly in the last words of Ecclesiastes, 'Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.' But the world bears a different aspect, and the answer looks different in its application. In

the *Iliad*, in spite of the gloom of Achilles, and his complaint of the double urn, the sense of life, on the whole, is sunny and cheerful. There is no yearning for anything beyond—nothing vague, nothing mystical. The earth, the men, the gods, have all a palpable reality about them. From first to last, we know where we are, and what we are about. In the *Odyssey* we are breathing another atmosphere. The speculations on the moral mysteries of our being hang like a mist over us from the beginning to the end; and the cloud from time to time descends on the actors and envelopes them with a preternatural halo. The poet evidently dislikes the expression of ‘suffering being the lot of mortals, as if it had been abused already for ungodly purposes. In the opening of the first book, Zeus reproves the folly of mortal men for casting the blame upon the gods when they themselves, in spite of all the gods can do to save them, persist in their own perverseness; and we never know as we go on, so fast we pass from one to the other, when we are among mere human beings, and when among the spiritual or the mystical, Those sea-nymphs, those cannibals, those enchantresses if intended to be real, are neither mortal nor divine—at any rate, like nothing divine which we had seen in Olympus, or on the plains of Ilium; and at times there is a strangeness even in the hero himself. Sometimes it is Ulysses painfully painfully toiling his way home across the unknown ocean; sometimes it is we that are Ulysses, and that unknown ocean is the life across which we are wandering, with too many Circes, and Sirens, and ‘Isles of Error in our path. In the same spirit death is no longer the end; and on every side long vistas seem to stretch away into the infinite, peopled with shadowy forms.

But, as if this palpable initiation into the unseen were still insufficient or unconvincing, the common ground on which we are treading,

sometimes shakes under us, and we feel as Humboldt describes himself to have felt at the first shock of an earthquake. Strange pieces of mysterious wildness are let fall in our way, coming suddenly on us like spectres, and vanishing without explanation or hint of their purpose. What are those Phœacian ships meant for, which required neither sail nor oar, but of their own selves read the hearts of those they carried, and bore them wherever they would go?—or the wild end of the ship which carried Ulysses home?—or that terrible piece of second sight in the Hall of Ithaca, for which the seer was brought from Pylos?—or those islands, one of which is forever wasting while another is born into being to complete the number?—or those mystical sheep and oxen, which knew neither age nor death, nor even had offspring born to them, and whose flesh upon the spits began to crawl and bellow?—or Helen singing round the horse inside the Trojan walls, when every Grecian chief's heart fainted in him as he thought he heard the voice of his own dear wife far away beyond the sea?

In the far gates of the Læstrygones, 'where such a narrow rim of night divided day from day, that a man who needed not sleep might earn a double hire, and the cry of the shepherd at evening driving home his flock was heard by the shepherd going out in the morning to pasture,' we have, perhaps, some tale of a Phœnician mariner who had wandered into the North Seas, and seen 'the Norway sunset into sunrise.' But what shall we say to that Syrian isle, 'where disease is not, nor hunger, nor thirst, and where, when men grow old, Apollo comes with Artemis, and alays them with his silver bow?' There is nothing in the Iliad like any of these stories.

Yet, when all is said, it matters little who wrote the poems. Each is so magnificent, that to have written both could scarcely have in-

creased the greatness of the man who had written one ; and if there were two Homers, the earth is richer by one more divine-gifted man than we had known. After all, it is perhaps more easy to believe that the differences which we seem to see arise from Homer's own choice of the material which best suited two works so different, than that nature was so largely prodigal as to have created in one age and in one people two such men ; for whether one or two, the authors of the Iliad and the Odyssey stand alone with Shakespeare far away above mankind.



## SOCIETY IN ITALY IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE RO- MAN REPUBLIC.

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WHETHER free institutions create good citizens, or whether conversely free institutions imply good citizens and wither up and perish as private virtue decays, is a question which will continue to be agitated as long as political society continues. The science of history ought to answer it, but the science of history is silent or ambiguous where, if it could tell us anything at all, it would be able to speak decidedly. What is called the philosophy of history is, and can be, only an attempted interpretation of earlier ages by the modes of thought current in our own ; and those modes of thought, being formed by the study of the phenomena which are actually around us, are changed from era to era. We read the past by the light of the present, and the forms vary as the shadows fall, or as the point of vision alters. Those who have studied most conscientiously the influences which have determined their own convictions will be the last to claim exemption from the control of forces which they recognize as universal and irresistible. The foreground of human life is the only part of it which we can examine with real exactness. As the distance recedes details disappear in the shade, or resolve themselves into outlines. We turn to contemporary books and records, but we lose in light and in connection with present experience what we gain in minuteness. The accounts of their own times which earlier writers leave to us are colored in turn

by their opinions, and we cannot so reproduce the past as to guard against prejudices which governed those writers as much as they govern ourselves. The result, even to the keenest historical sight, is no more than a picture which each of us paints for himself upon the retina of his own imagination.

These conditions of our nature warn us all, if we are wise, against generalized views of history. We form general views. This, too, we cannot help, unless we are ignorant of the past altogether. But we receive them for what they are worth. They do not repose upon a knowledge of facts which can form the foundations of a science. We see certain objects, but we see them not as they were, but foreshortened by distance and colored by the atmosphere of time. The impression, before it arrives in our minds, has been half created by ourselves. Therefore it is that from philosophy of history, from attempts to explain the phenomena of earlier generations by referring them to general principles, we turn with weariness and distrust. We find more interest in taking advantage of those rare occasions where we can apply a telescope to particular incidents, and catch a sight of small fractions of the actual doings of our fellow-mortals, where accident enables us to examine them in detailed pattern. We may obtain little in this way to convince our judgment, but we can satisfy an innocent curiosity, and we can sometimes see enough to put us on our guard against universal conclusions.

We know, for instance (so far as we can speak of knowledge of the general character of an epoch), that the early commonwealth of Rome was distinguished by remarkable purity of manners; that the marriage tie was singularly respected; that the Latin yeomen, who were the back-bone of the community, were industrious and laborious, that they lived with frugality and simplicity, and brought up their

children in a humble fear of God or of the gods as rulers to whom they would one day have to give an account. That the youth of a plant which grew so sturdily was exceptionally healthy is no more than we should naturally infer, and that the fact was so is confirmed to us both by legend and authentic record. The change of manners is assumed by some persons to have come in with the Cæsars. Virtue is supposed to have flourished so long as liberty survived, and the perfidy and profligacy of which we read with disgust in Tacitus and Juvenal are regarded as the offspring of despotism. With the general state of European morals under the first centuries of the Empire we are extremely ill-acquainted. Tacitus and Juvenal describe the society of the capital. Of life in the country and in the provincial towns they tell us next to nothing. If we may presume that the Messalinas had their imitators in the provinces; if we may gather from the Epistles of St. Paul that the morals of Corinth for instance were not distinguished by any special excellence, yet there was virtue or desire of virtue enough in the world to make possible the growth of Christianity.

Accident, on the other hand, has preserved the fragments of a drama of real life, which was played out in the last days of the Republic, partly in Rome itself, partly in a provincial city in South Italy, from which it would appear that the ancient manners were already everywhere on the decline; that institutions suited to an age when men were a law to themselves, could not prevent them from becoming wicked if they were inclined, and only saved them from punishment when they had deserved it. The broken pieces of the story leave much to be desired. The actions are preserved; the actors are little more than names. The flesh and blood, the thoughts that wrought in the brain, the passions that boiled in the veins—these are dry as the dust

of a mummy from an Egyptian catacomb. Though generations pass away, however, the earth at last remains. We cannot see the old nations, but we can stand where they stood; we can look on the landscape on which they looked; we can watch the shadows of the clods chasing one another on the same mountain slopes; we can listen to the everlasting music of the same water-falls; we can hear the same surf far off breaking upon the beach.

Let us transport ourselves then to the Neapolitan town of Larino, not far from the Gulf of Venice. In the remains of the amphitheatre we can recognize the Roman hands that once were laboring there.

Let us imagine that it is the year 88 before Christ, when Cæsar was a boy of twelve, when the Social War had just been ended by Sylla, and Marius had fled from Rome, to moralize amidst the ruins of Carthage. Larino, like most of the Samnite towns, had taken part with the patriots. Several of its most distinguished citizens had fallen in battle. They had been defeated, but their cause had survived. Summoned to Asia to oppose Mithridates, Sylla had postponed his revenge, and had conceded at least some of the objects for which the Italians had been in arms. The leaders returned to their homes, and their estates escaped confiscation. The two families of highest consequence in Larino were the Cluentii and the Auri. Both were in mourning. Lucius Cluentius, who had commanded the insurgent army in Campania, had been killed at Nola. Marcus Aurius had not returned to Larino at the peace, and was supposed to have fallen in the North of Italy. Common political sympathies had drawn the survivors together, and they were further connected by marriage. There remained of the Cluentii a widowed mother named Sassia, with two children, Aulus Cluentius Avitus, a boy of sixteen, and his sister Cluentia, a year younger.



Dinea, the mother of the Aurii, was a widow also. Dinea had been the sister of Sassia's husband, and was therefore herself a Cluentia. She had four children, all some years older than their cousins—Marius, Aurius, whom she believed to be dead; Numerius Aurius; Cnæus Magius Aurius; and a daughter, Magia.

The Aurii had other relations of the same name at Larino—Aurius Melinus, Caius Melinus, and several more. The Cluentii were the last of their race. Both families were rich. The wealth which had poured into Rome after the conquest of the East had filtered over Italy. These provincial magistrates lived in handsome villas, with comforts which would have made Cato shudder, and waited upon by retinues of slaves. Otherwise scandal had no harm to say of either Aurii or Cluentii. They were honored for their patriotism, and beloved for their private virtues.

A third family at Larino, the Oppianici, though also connected with the Aurii, belonged to the opposite faction. Caius Oppianicus, the younger of two brothers, was married to Dinea's daughter Magia. Statius Albinus Oppianicus, the elder, and the head of the clan, had been three times married; first to a sister of Dinea, who had died, leaving him with a son; next, to a lady named Papia, who bore him a son also, and whom he had divorced; lastly, to Novia, who was for the present living with him and had brought him a third son, an infant. He had squandered his own fortune and the fortune of his first wife, whom he was suspected of having poisoned. He had since been living by his wits, and had figured unpleasantly in a late trial at Rome. A foolish youth of Larino, appropriately named Asinius, had come into possession of a large sum of money. Like Iago, who made his fool his purse, Oppianicus took possession of Asinius, carried him to Rome to see the world, and launched him among the taverns and the gambling houses. A confed-

erate, Avilius, a Larinate also, made a third in the party; and one night, when Asinius was absent with a female companion, with whom they were assured that he would remain till morning, Avilius affected to be taken suddenly ill, and said that he must make his will. A notary and witnesses were introduced to whom the persons of Avilius and Asinius were alike unknown. Avilius bequeathed all his property to Oppianicus, signed his name Asinius, and then recovered. The true Asinius was waylaid and killed a few days after. Oppianicus produced the will, claimed the estate, and obtained it—not, however, without some notice having been drawn to the matter which might have ended unpleasantly for him. Suspicions had been aroused, it does not appear how. Avilius was arrested and carried before one of the city magistrates, to whom in his terror he confessed the truth. Fortunately for Oppianicus, the magistrate was discreet and not inaccessible. The spoils were divided and the affair was hushed up, but it had naturally been much talked of at Larino. Oppianicus had been looked on askance; in the matter of fortune he was in a desperate condition, and he was on the look-out for the nearest means of improving his circumstances.

He was a man, it appears, of considerable personal attractions. He had made himself agreeable to his brother's wife Magia, and had seduced her. Her brother Numerius caught a fever and suddenly died, leaving his share of the Aurian property to his brother Cnæus Magius.

Cnæus Magius fell ill also very soon after. He, perhaps, suspected the cause of his sickness. At any rate he had seen with alarm and suspicion his sister's intimacy with a person of so questionable a character as Albinus Oppianicus. His alarms were not diminished when her husband, Caius Oppianicus, was found dead in his bed, from some unexplained

visitation; and growing rapidly worse, and feeling that his own end was not far off, he sent for his sister, and in the presence of his mother Dinea he questioned her as to whether she was pregnant. She assured him that it was so. She half satisfied him that she was herself innocent of guilt, and that Caius Oppianicus, and his brother, was the father. He made a will bequeathing the whole inheritance which had fallen to him to this child as soon as it should be born. He appointed his mother, Dinea, the guardian, lest Albinus Oppianicus should interfere. If the child should miscarry, or should not survive, Dinea and Magia were then to divide the estates between them.

The arrangement had scarcely been completed when Cnæus Magius died. Oppianicus then induced Magia to take a medicine which produced abortion. Magia and Dinea became thus coheiresses, and Oppianicus saw almost within his reach the accumulated wealth of the family.

At this moment a stranger appeared it Larino who brought news that the elder brother, Marcus Aurius, was still alive. He had not been killed, as report had said, but had been taken prisoner, and was confined with hard labor at a convict station in the North of Italy. The story was not improbable, and the newcomer produced credible evidence of the truth of what he said. He gave Dinea the names and addresses of persons who had seen Marcus Aurius, and could find him. The hope that she had still a son surviving came to comfort her in her desolation, and she despatched friends to discover him, purchase his release, and restore him to her.

So unpleasant a discovery came inopportunately for the schemes of Oppianicus; but he lost neither heart nor presence of mind. He made acquaintance with the stranger, purchased his help, and induced him to vary his

account, and throw Dinea on a false scent. He sent off a confederate to gain the parties in the North and mislead the mother's messengers, while a certain Sextus Vibrius was despatched to obtain true directions from them, to find out Marcus Aurius, and assassinate him. The game was dangerous, however, so long as Dinea lived. She had Aurian kinsmen in Larino who were powerful, and to whom she might possibly appeal. He was aware that her suspicions would turn upon himself as soon as she should hear that her son could not be found, and he thought it better to anticipate future trouble by removing her at once. She was growing old, and her health had been shaken by sorrow and anxiety. Oppianicus recommended to her the assistance of a physician of whose skill he professed to have had experience. Dinea declined his advice, and sent for another doctor from Ancona, whom Oppianicus had some difficulty in gaining over to his purpose. He succeeded at last, however, with a bribe of four thousand pounds, and the unfortunate woman was poisoned. Before she died she, too, made a will; but Oppianicus destroyed it. His agents in the North sent him word that his work had been successfully done. Marcus Aurius had been found and killed, and all traces were destroyed by which his fate could be discovered. Oppianicus at once divorced his present wife, married Magia, and took possession of the estates in her name.

He had played his cards skilfully; but again, as with his adventure at Rome, without having succeeded perfectly in averting suspicion from himself. Many eyes, no doubt, were watching him. The Larinates could not see with complaisance the entire disappearance of one of their most honored families, and the Aurian estates passing into the hands of a blemished and bankrupt adherent of the Oligarchic faction. The messengers sent by Dinea reported that they could not discover Marcus



Aurius ; but they had found that secret efforts had been made to baffle them. They had ascertained that Oppianicus had been concerned in those efforts, and they wrote to Larino, charging him with foul play. Dinea being dead, the letters were taken to the nearest relatives of the family, Aurius Melinus.

This Aurius Melinus had already appeared before the Larinate public in a not very creditable manner. Soon after the death of her father he had married Cluentia, daughter of the widow Sassia, and sister of Aulus Cluentius Avitus. Sassia, who was a licentious, unprincipled woman, became enamoured of her son-in-law. Under the ancient Roman law, the marriage tie had been as indissoluble as in the strictest Christian community. But the restraint of marriage, like every other check on the individual will, had gone down before the progress of democracy. To divorce a wife was now as easy as to change a dress. The closest affinity was no longer an obstacle to a new connection. Sassia succeeded in enchanting her son-in-law. The daughter was divorced, and the mother was installed in her place.

Public opinion, though degenerate, was not entirely corrupted. The world of Larino considered itself outraged by what it still regarded as incest. Aulus Cluentius, the son, took his mother's conduct so much to heart that he refused to see either her or her husband, and the domestic scandal had created almost as much agitation as the tragedy of Dinea and her children. The two vicious streams were now to unite. Aurius Melinus, perhaps to recover the esteem of his fellow-citizens, put himself forward to demand justice against the murderers of his kinsmen. He called a public meeting ; he read aloud in the assembly the letters from the North denouncing Oppianicus. He demanded an immediate investigation. If his cousin Marcus was no longer alive, he

charged Oppianicus with having assassinated him.

Suspicious already rife turned to certainty. The people rose. They rushed to Oppianicus's house to seize and tear him in pieces. Exceptional villains appear at times to be the special care of Providence, as if they had a work given them to do and might not perish till it was accomplished. Oppianicus had fled; and unhappily a political revolution had not only provided him with a sure surfuge, but with means yet more fatal of adding to his crimes. While Sylla was fighting Mithridates in Asia, Marius had returned to a seventh Consulship, and the democracy had enjoyed a brief and sanguinary triumph; but Marius was dead, and Sylla had returned a conqueror, and the name of every eminent advocate of popular rights was now entered on a proscription list. Sylla's lieutenant, Quintus Metellus was encamped not far from Larino. Oppianicus threw himself on Metellus's protection, representing himself, perhaps, as the victim of a popular commotion. Metellus sent him on to the Dictator, and from Sylla he received a commission to purge Larino of its suspected citizens, to remove the magistrates, and to execute every one who had been connected with the Marian faction. In the haste of the time he was allowed to draw the list of the proscribed himself, and to enter upon it both his open enemies and the accomplices of his crimes, whose too intimate acquaintance with him he had reason to fear. Aurius perished, and every remaining member of the Auran kindred. Sextus Vibrius perished, who had been his instrument in hiding the traces of Marcus Aurius and murdering him. The proscribed were seized and killed without being allowed to speak; and thus at one blow Oppianicus was able to rid himself of every one whose vengeance he had to fear, and of the only

witness by whom the worst of his crimes could be brought home to him.

For his services to Sylla he was probably rewarded further out of the estates of his victims, and by a series of enormous crimes, which even in that bad time it is to be hoped could not be easily paralleled, he had become the most opulent and most powerful citizen of his native town.

Oppianicus had obtained all that he had desired, but he found, as all mortals find, that the enjoyment had been in the pursuit—that the prize when won still failed to give perfect satisfaction. Happiness was still flying before him—almost within his grasp, but still eluding it. Perhaps the murder of her husband, her mother, and her brothers, may have sate uneasily upon Magia. At any rate he had grown weary of Magia. She too was now cleared away to make room for a more suitable companion. On the death of Aurius Melinus, Sassia was again a widow, and Oppianicus became a suitor for her hand. It was true that he had killed her husband, but he swore, like Richard, that he had done it ‘to help her to a better husband.’ It was Sassia’s ‘heavenly face’ which had set him on, and Sassia listened, not unfavorably. There were difficulties, however, which had first to be removed. Sassia was rich, and in a position to make conditions. Oppianicus had three children, whose mothers she may have disliked, or whom she expected that she would find in her way. She was willing to tolerate the eldest, who bore his father’s name, but she refused to marry him till the two little ones had been removed.

The horrible woman was showing herself a suitable mate for Oppianicus. Her wealth her person, perhaps this last proof of the hardness of disposition, determined him to secure her on her own terms. One of his little boys was being brought up with his mother at Theano. He sent for the child to Larino. In the night it

was taken ill and died, and to prevent inquiry into the manner of its death, the body was burnt before dawn the next morning. Two days after the other little boy died with as mysterious suddenness; and Sassia became Oppiniacus's wife.

The people of Larino shuddered and muttered. They could not challenge the favorite of Sylla, the chief magistrate of the town, who had the local authority in his hands and the confidence of the Dictator at Rome; but they shrank from contact with him. They avoided both him and his wife as if they had the plague. Young Cluentius especially held aloof from his mother more sternly than ever, and would neither speak to her nor see her.

At length Sylla died; the middle classes through Italy drew their breath freely again, and at Larino as elsewhere the people could venture to make their voices heard. There was in the town an ancient and venerable college of Priests of Mars, a sort of Cathedral Chapter. The priests had obtained the Roman franchise as a result of the Italian war. It had been confirmed to them by Marius. It had been taken away again by Sylla. And now that Sylla was gone, a deputation from the town was sent to the Senate to petition for its restoration. With this deputation, as one of its members, went young Aulus Cluentius, who was then acquiring fame as a public speaker, and he soon attracted notice at Rome by his vindication of the rights of the Chapter. Oppianicus, who had been Sylla's instrument in carrying out the disfranchisement in Larino, had his own good reasons for dreading to see his work overthrown. With the restoration of political liberty municipal self-government would be restored along with it. He feared Cluentius on personal grounds as well as political. He saw in him his future accuser, and he had a further motive of another kind for wishing to destroy him. Cluentius had not yet made his will, for he would not leave



his fortune to his mother, and he could not bring himself to make a disposition in which her name should not be mentioned. In the absence of a will she was his heir-at-law. It was but one more murder, and Oppianicus would at once quit himself of a dangerous antagonist, gratify his wife, and add the lands of the Cluentii to the vast estates which he had accumulated already.

Cluentius was out of health. Cleophantus, the physician by whom he was attended, was a man of eminence and character, whom it was unsafe to approach by the means which he had used so successfully in the poisoning of Dinea. But Cleophantus had a slave who worked in his laboratory, whom Oppianicus calculated on finding corruptible, and the assistant by whom medicines are made up is in such cases as useful as his principal. He did not think it prudent to appear in person, but a patrician friend, one of the Fabricii, undertook the business for him; and Fabricius felt his way with the slave through his freedman Scamander.

Villains have an instinct for recognizing one another, and rarely make mistakes in the character of the person whom they address. The necessary tact, however, was wanting to Scamander; and in the class of wretches who were bought like sheep in the market, and might be flung at pleasure into the fishponds to feed the aristocrats' lampreys, a degree of virtue was found at last which was to bring Oppianicus's atrocities to a close. Diogenes—so the slave was called—received Scamander's overtures with apparent acquiescence. He listened, drew Scamander on to reveal the name of the employers, and then whispered the story to his master. Cleophantus carried it to Cluentius. An honest senator, Marcus Bibrius, was taken into counsel; and it was agreed that Oppianicus should be played with till he had committed himself, when punishment could at last overtake him. Diogenes

kept up his correspondence with Scamander, and promised to administer the poison as soon as he was provided with materials. It was arranged that Cluentius should purchase Diogenes, that he might have a skilled attendant to wait upon him in his illness. The conspiracy would then be carried on under Cluentius's own roof, where the proceedings could be conveniently watched, and conversations be overheard. Oppianicus was out-manœuvred at last. Both he and Fabricius were tempted to betray themselves. The poison was conveyed to Diogenes ; the money which was to pay for the murder was brought to him, and received in the presence of concealed witnesses. The criminals were caught red-handed, without room for denial or concealment. They were seized and denounced, and brought to immediate trial.

Horrible crimes have, unfortunately, been so frequent in this world that they have no permanent interest for us ; and, unless they have been embalmed in poetry, or are preserved by the exceptional genius of accomplished historians, the memory of them rarely survives a single generation. The tragedies of Larino would have passed into oblivion with the lives of those who had witnessed and shuddered at them. Posterity, if it cared to recollect, would have had their curiosity and their sense of justice satisfied if they could have learned that the chief villain was detected and punished at last ; and to revive an interest in a detailed chapter of human wickedness after nearly two thousand years would have been alike superfluous and impossible. The story, however, now assumes features of deeper importance. Oppianicus and his victims are nothing to us. The rise and fall of the Roman Commonwealth is of undying consequence to the political student ; and other thousands of years will still have to pass before we shall cease to study the most minute particulars which will interpret

to us so remarkable a phenomenon. The judicial investigation into the crimes of Opianicus was to form an illustration of the incurable corruption of the Roman Senate ; and that Senate's most brilliant member—better known to English schoolboys than the most distinguished modern classic (Kikero they now call him ; but we are too old to learn the new nomenclature)—was to be the principal instrument in exposing it.

Criminal trials at Rome were conducted before a body of judges or jurymen, the selection of whom had been one of the chief subjects of contention during the recent political struggles. The privileged orders affected to fear that justice would be degraded if the administration of it was extended to persons who were incompetent for so honorable an office. The people complained that their lives and properties were unsafe in the hands of proud, extravagant, and venal aristocrats. The Senators declared that if members of their own order had not been always pure, the middle classes would be found immeasurably worse. The middle classes, without laying claims to superior virtue, protested that the Senators had already descended to the lowest depths of the abyss of dishonesty.

That the office of a judge, at any rate, might be made one of the most lucrative situations which the State had to offer became apparent in a prosecution which happened about the same time of the Prætor Verres for the plunder of Sicily. In the trial of Verres it was proved that the governor of a Roman province under the Republic. looked on his period of office as an opportunity of making his fortune by extortion and the public sale of justice. To be successful, he must carry off three times as much booty as he expected to be allowed to retain. A third had to be bestowed in buying the goodwill of the consuls, tribunes, and other magistrates ; a third in corrupting the juries, when he was called to account by the pillaged

provincials; the remaining part only he might calculate on keeping for himself.

The Court which was to try the case of the Larinates was composed of thirty-two Senators. Gaius Gracchus had granted the jury-right to the Equites; but it had again been taken from them by Sylla. The judges were now exclusively patricians, the purest blood of which Rome had to boast. Scamander, Fabricius, and Oppianicus were indicted successively for conspiring the murder of Cluentius. The prisoners were tried separately. Though rumor had caught hold of some features of the story, the circumstances were generally unknown. Oppianicus, through his wealth and connections, had secured powerful patrons; and Cicero, who rarely took part in prosecutions, was retained in the first instance to defend Scamander.

Publius Canutius opened the case for Cluentius; and Cicero, though he exerted himself to the utmost, very soon discovered that he had a bad cause. The evidence was absolutely conclusive. Scamander was condemned, and Fabricius was brought to the bar. Cicero withdrew from the case and contented himself with watching it. Fabricius's brother, Cepasius, took his place as advocate; but with no better success. Fabricius, too, was convicted, but with a slight difference in the form of the result. A unanimous verdict was given against Scamander; a single Senator, called Stalenus, voted for the acquittal of Fabricius. There was no more doubt of his guilt than of his freedman's. The evidence against them both was the same. Stalenus had not been bribed, for Fabricius was poor; but he intended to intimate to the rich Oppianicus that he was open to an arrangement when his own turn should come on.

Stalenus was a man of consequence. He had been quæstor, and aspired to the higher offices of State. He had obtained some noto-



riety in a recent civil case in which one of the parties was a certain Safinius Atella. Safinius had the worst of the argument, and Stalenus had boasted that for a round sum of money he could purchase a verdict notwithstanding. The money was given to him, but Safinius lost his cause, and ill-natured persons had whispered that Stalenus had kept it for himself. Such a transaction, however, if successful and undetected, might pass for a stroke of cleverness. At all events the suspicions attached to it had not interfered with the further employment of this ingenious young nobleman. He was merely observed, and anything singular in his conduct was set down to its right motive.

Oppianicus's case might well be considered desperate. Scamander and Fabricius had been accessories only to a single attempt at murder. The past history of Oppianicus had probably been alluded to generally in the preliminary trials. He would stand at the bar an object of general abhorrence for various other enormities, and the proofs which had been sufficient to condemn his accomplices would tell with tenfold force against their instigator, whose past career had been so dark. In the vote of Stalenus only some glimmer of hope remained. The Court adjourned for a few days. In the interval Oppianicus made Stalenus's acquaintance, and they soon understood one another.

Stalenus told him frankly that his situation was a difficult one, and would probably be expensive. The judges who had condemned the other prisoners would commit manifest perjury if they acquitted Oppianicus. Public feeling being excited, they would be exposed to general opprobrium, and they would require to be well paid for their services. Still, however, he thought it might be managed. He knew his men, and he considered that he could secure fifteen votes out of the thirty-two, which in addition to his own would be sufficient. Money only was necessary: each vote would require £ 400.

Oppianicus's fortune would be of little use to him if he was convicted. Being a Roman citizen, he was not liable to a sentence of death from a criminal court, but exile and a fine amounting nearly to confiscation were as bad or possibly worse. He assented to Stalenus's terms, and paid into his hands £6400.

It was understood by this time that a negotiation with the prisoner was going forward. Stalenus had felt his way, dropping hints here and there in whatever quarter they were likely to be operative, and at length the corruptible fifteen had given conditional assurances that they might be relied on. But the terms, as he expected, were high; very little would be left for himself; and he began to reflect that with perfect safety he might keep the whole of it. The honest part of the jury would, he thought, undoubtedly vote for a conviction. Those who had agreed to sell their consciences would be so angry if they were now disappointed that he might count on them with equal certainty, and it would be in vain that after a verdict of guilty such a wretch as Oppianicus would appeal to public opinion. No one would believe him, no one would pity him. Thus the night before the trial came on he informed his friends upon the jury that Oppianicus had changed his mind, and that no money was forth-coming. They were as exasperated as he hoped to find them. He was himself not suspected, and they met the next day in court with a most virtuous resolution that justice should not be balked of its object.

The voting in a Roman trial was either open or secret, as the Court might decide for itself. Oppianicus not relying too perfectly on his friends, and anxious not to be cheated of the wares for which he had paid, demanded that each judge should give his verdict by word of mouth. The tribune Quinctius, who was secretly his friend, supported him, and his request was agreed to. Every one was aware that

there had been bribery, and the members of the jury who were open to bribes were generally well known. It was, of course, assumed that they would vote for an acquittal, and Stalenus and his friends were observed with contemptuous curiosity, but without a doubt of what their judgment would be.

It happened that Stalenus was the first to vote, and two of his intimate associates were the second and third. To the astonishment of every one, all three without the slightest hesitation voted guilty. The rest of the judges, or rather the respectable portion of them, were utterly bewildered. The theory of corruption implies that men who take bribes will generally fulfil their contract, nor again do men usually take bribes to vote according to their real convictions. They were assured that Stalenus had been corrupted by some one to give a false verdict. They thought he had been corrupted by Oppianicus; but he had voted against Oppianicus; he had voted for Cluentius,—therefore it seemed he must have been bribed by Cluentius, and Oppianicus might be innocent after all. Thus argued the outside public almost universally, having heard the story but imperfectly. Thus argued even a section of the judges themselves, and in their confusion five of the more honest of them actually voted for Oppianicus's acquittal. The larger number concluded at last that they must go by the evidence. Stalenus and his friends might have taken money from Cluentius. Cluentius might have been afraid to trust himself entirely to the justice of his cause. But corruption could not alter the truth. Oppianicus was unquestionably guilty, and he was condemned by a large majority.

He for his part was banished, clamoring that he was betrayed, but unable, as Stalenus expected, to obtain a remission of his sentence. In modern eyes such a punishment was immeasurably too lenient. To a Roman who

wanted courage to end his misfortunes with his own hand, exile was held to be the most terrible of calamities. Cæsar pleaded against the execution of the accomplices of Catiline, that death ended all things. He would have them live and suffer. 'Life,' said Cicero on the present occasion, 'was worse than death to Oppianicus. No one believed any longer the old wives' fable of Tartarus. Death would be but a happy release to him.' He left Rome to wander about Italy, as if marked with a curse. Sassia followed him to torment him with her reproaches and infidelities. One day as he was riding his horse threw him. He was mortally injured and died.

So ended Oppianicus. So, however, did not end the consequences of his various villanies. Political passions were again rising. The people in Rome and out of it were clamoring to the skies against the iniquities of the Senate. The story went abroad that a senatorial jury had again been bribed; and being without detailed knowledge of the case, the Roman populace rushed naturally to the conclusion that an innocent man had been condemned. Oppianicus had protested against the verdict, and had denounced his judges. It was enough. The verdict was indisputably corrupt, and a corrupt verdict, as a matter of course; must be a false verdict.

Quinctius the tribune, Oppianicus's friend, encouraged the agitation. It was an opportunity not to be neglected of bringing the Senate into disrepute. Thrice he harangued the General Assembly in the Forum. He insisted that the degraded patricians should be stripped once more of the privileges which they abused. Cluentius's name became a by-word. He who in his humble way had been the champion of his own townspeople was identified with the hated senatorial monopoly. So furious were the people that for eight years, Cicero says, they would not so much as listen to a word



that could be said for him. Every senator who had voted for Oppianicus's condemnation was prosecuted under the Jury Laws. Some were fined, some were expelled from the Senate by the Censors. One of them, Caius Egnatius, was disinherited by his father. The Senate itself was invited to condemn its own members. Not daring to refuse, the Senate saved its conscience by a wise generality, and passed a resolution that any person or persons who had been instrumental in corrupting public justice had been guilty of a heinous offence. Finally Cluentius himself was brought to trial, and so hot was public feeling against him that Cicero was obliged to confine his defence to a legal technicality. The law, he said, was for the restraint of corruption in the juries. The juries under Sylla's constitution could consist of senators only, and Cluentius being an Eques, the law could not touch him.

Gradually the outcry died away, melting into the general steam of indignation which in a few years swept away the constitution, and under new forms made justice possible again. But the final act of the Cluentian drama had still to be played out. Again Cluentius was to appear before a tribunal of Roman judges. Again Cicero was to defend him—no longer under a quibble, but on the merits of the whole case, into which at last it was possible to enter.

From the speech which Cicero delivered on this occasion we have gathered our story. It is not a favorable specimen of his oratorical power. There is no connection in the events. There is no order of time. We are hurried from date to date, from place to place. The same person is described under different names; the same incident in different words. The result is a mass of threads so knotted, twisted, and entangled, that only patient labor can sort them out into intelligible arrangement.

What Cicero lacks in method, however, he makes up in earnestness. He was evidently

supremely affected by the combination of atrocities and misunderstandings by which an innocent, well-deserving man was likely to be overwhelmed.

The various lovers of Sassia had been either murdered or had died, or had deserted her. She had lost much of her ill-gained fortunes, She had grown too old for the further indulgence of her pleasant vices. One desire alone remained, and had devoured the rest—a desire for revenge upon her son Cluentius. In the prejudiced condition of public feeling at Rome, any wily accusation against him might be expected to obtain a hearing. Having escaped the prosecution for the bribery of the judges, he was charged with having murdered one of his friends, whose property he hoped to inherit. The attempt was clumsy and it failed. The friend was proved to have died where Cluentius could have had no access to him; and a nephew, and not Cluentius, was his heir. The next accusation was of having tried to poison the surviving son of Oppianicus. Cluentius and the younger Oppianicus had been together at a festival of Larino. Another youth who was also present there had died a few days later, and it was alleged that he had drunk by mistake from a cup which had been prepared for Sassia's stepson. But again the evidence broke down. There was no proof that the death was caused by poison, or that Cluentius was in any way connected with it.

The accursed woman, though twice baffled, would not abandon her object. In both instances proof of malice had been wanting. Cluentius had no object in perpetrating either of the crimes of which she had accused him. If he had no grudge against the young Oppianicus, however, he had undoubtedly hated his father, and she professed to have discovered that the father had not died, as had been reported, by the fall from his horse, but had been poisoned by a cake which had been ad-

ministered to him at Cluentius's instigation. The method in which Sassia went to work to make out her case throws a fresh and hideous light on the Roman administration of justice in the last days of liberty. She produced two witnesses who were both slaves. To one of them, Nicostratus, a Greek, she owed an old grudge. He had belonged to Oppianicus the elder, and had revealed certain infidelities of hers which had led to inconvenience. The other, Strato, was the slave of a doctor who had attended Oppianicus after his accident. Since neither of these men were willing to say what she required them to say of their own accord, she demanded according to custom that they should be tortured. The Roman law did not acknowledge any rights in these human chattels: a slave on the day of his bondage ceased to be a man. Nicostratus and Strato were racked till the executioners were weary, but nothing could be extracted from them. A distinguished advocate who was present, and was not insensible to pity, said that the slaves were being tortured not to make them tell the truth, but to make them lie. The court took the same view, and they were released.

Once more Sassia was defeated, but she waited her opportunity. Three years later, the orator Hortensius, a general protector of rogues, was elected to the consulate. The vindictiveness with which she had come forward as the prosecutrix of her own son had injured her cause. She made one more effort, and this time she prevailed on the young Oppianicus, who had meanwhile married her daughter, to appear in her place. She had purchased Strato after his escape from the torture, and had power of life and death over him. He had murdered a fellow slave; and it was alleged that when he confessed to this crime he had confessed to the other also. He was crucified, and to prevent his telling inconvenient truths upon the cross, his tongue

was cut out before he was nailed upon it. On the strength of his pretended deposition a criminal process was once more instituted against Cluentius before a Roman jury. The story had by this time become so notorious, and the indignation of the provinces had been so deeply roused, that deputations from every town in the south of Italy came to the Capital to petition in Cluentius's favor. How the trial ended is unknown. It may be hoped that he was acquitted—but it is uncertain. Innocent men have suffered by millions in this world. As many guilty wretches have escaped, and seemed to triumph; but the vengeance which follows upon evil acts does not sleep because individuals are wronged. The penalty is exacted to the last farthing from the community which permits injustice to be done. And the Republican Commonwealth of Rome was fast filling the measure of its iniquities. In another half-century perjured juries and corrupted magistrates had finished their work; the world could endure them no longer, and the free institutions which had been the admiration of mankind were buried under the throne of the Cæsars.



## LUCIAN.

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THE men of genius who had the misfortune, under the later Roman Emperors, to be blind to the truth of Christianity have been punished by a neglect which they do not wholly deserve. With Tacitus the era closes in which a Roman of ability has been allowed to have shut his eyes to the light without wilful sin. Thenceforward all men of intellectual reputation who remained unconverted have been held guilty by Christendom of deliberate unbelief. Their writings have been thrown aside as either mischievous or useless. The age itself and the character of their contemporaries has been left to be described by the Fathers of the Church ; and unless for special reasons, or by exceptional and curious students, the last representatives of the old classical literature remain generally unread. Nor is this neglect diminishing or likely to diminish. When modern books were scarce, any writing which had value in it was prized at its true worth. Plutarch was Shakespeare's chief authority for his Greeks and Romans. Men of culture, who were weary of the quarrels between Catholics and Protestants, preferred the calmer atmosphere of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. The lofty spiritualism of the Alexandrian Platonists was a favorite food with the Cambridge philosophers of the seventeenth century. The exacting demands of modern literature, however, leave inadequate leisure for the study of even the

most accomplished of the classical writers. Modern languages encroach more and more on the old domain of Greek and Latin, and either divide the schools with them or threaten to expel them altogether. The ready quotation from Horace has disappeared from society and almost from the Senate house. Still less of leisure has been left for the less polished, if not less interesting, writers of the succeeding centuries; and except an occasional metaphysician, who makes excursions into Proclus or Plotinus, or an anti-Christian controversialist, who goes for assistance to the fragments of Celsus or Porphyry, it is rare that any one wanders aside into the pages of authors who are looked on as degenerate classics of dangerous tendency, without the literary merit which might compensate for their spiritual deficiency.

Our indifference costs us more than we are aware of. It is supremely desirable that we should be acquainted with the age in which Christianity became the creed of civilized mankind, and we learn but half the truth from the Christian Fathers. Whether we regard Christianity as a miracle from without, or as developed from within, out of the conscience and intellect of man, we perceive, at any rate, that it grew by natural causes, that it commended itself by argument and example, that it was received or rejected according to the moral and mental condition of those to whom it was addressed. We shall understand the history of its triumph only when we see the heathen world as the heathen world saw itself. The most indispensable guides in such an inquiry are the writers who remained unconvinced. Nor is it uninteresting to see why they were unconvinced, or how, when they noticed its existence, the new creed appeared to them.

We invite our readers to forget their prejudices, and to accompany us, so far as our few pages will allow, on an expedition into Lucian. Every one has heard of Lucian's name; nine

people out of ten, if asked who Lucian was, would be ready with an answer that he was a scoffer and an atheist, and in that answer would show decisively that they had never read a page of him. The censure and the ignorance rise from the same source. On the strength of a Dialogue, which has been proved to be spurious, Lucian has been denounced as a direct enemy of Christianity. Lucian is supposed to have encouraged with his satires the hatred which took shape in the persecutions. He has been, therefore, spoken of systematically as a special servant of Satan, as a person whose company decent people were bound to avoid.

Yet Lucian, in his genuine writings, mentions the Christians but once, and then only as a simple-minded sect whose credulity made them the easy dupes of quacks and charlatans. He had looked at Christianity, and had passed it by as one of the thousand illusions which were springing like mushrooms in the hotbed of Greco-Asiatic speculation. The abominations of paganism and the cant of the popular philosophers were the real objects of his detestation; and, so far as concerned the common enemy, the Fathers and Lucian were fighting on the same side. Yet it is doubtful whether, had they known him as he was, he would have been regarded as a welcome ally, or otherwise as anything but intolerable to them. The lightning-like mockery with which Lucian strikes at folly and imposture was unfavorable, however legitimate its objects, to the generation of a believing spirit. To the Fathers pagan cultus was a worship of devils, to Lucian it was a dishonest or base affectation; and his dissecting knife cuts occasionally into theories where their own nerves were susceptible. His detestation of falsehood was a passion. No *καλὸν ψεῦδος*, no edifying falsehood, no ideal loveliness or supposed beneficent influence to be derived from illusion could blind his judgment or seduce his allegiance to

truth. He lived in an age when the established creeds were a mockery, and philosophy was a juggle of words; when itinerant thaumaturgists, like Proteus or Apollonius, were the favorites of emperors, and were regarded by millions upon millions as representatives or incarnations of the gods; while politicians and men of the world were laboring in desperate conservatism to keep the pagan religion on its feet, for fear society should fall to pieces if it was openly confessed to be untrue. With this ignoble terror, and with the quackery and dishonesty which were the inevitable fruit of it, Lucian lived in perpetual war, striking at it with a pungency of satire which is perhaps without its equal in literature. He has the keenness of Voltaire, the moral indignation, disguised behind his jests, of Swift; but while Lucian, no more than Swift or Voltaire, will spare the scoundrel any single lash which is his due, he, like Shakespeare, has still a pity for the poor wretch, as if to be a scoundrel was itself the sharpest of penalties. When Charon's boat-load of ghosts is carried before the judgment bar of Rhadamanthus, a powerful nobleman is found among them who had exhausted the list of possible human depravities—cruelty and avarice, gluttony and lust indulged beyond the limits of nature. Witness after witness deposes to the dreadful truth. His *bed* tells its tale of horrors. His lamp, unable to say what had been done in daylight when it was not present, details its catalogue of midnight orgies. Each crime, discovered or undiscovered, was supposed to leave its scars upon the soul. The prisoner, being ordered to strip, discloses a person so wealed and marked that the natural substance of it was nowhere visible. Rhadamanthus exclaims in horror for some new punishment adequate to such enormous villany. A poor cobbler standing by suggests that justice will be vindicated sufficiently if the cup of Lethe, which each shade was permitted to



drink as he passed from the dread tribunal, should in this instance be withheld. To remember what he had done in life would be retribution enough for the worst of criminals, without further torture.

But there is an interest in Lucian beyond his satire and beyond his literary excellence. Lucian more than any other writer, pagan or Christian, enables us to see what human beings were, how they lived, what they thought, felt, said, and did in the centuries when paganism was expiring and Christianity was taking the place of it.

The kingdom of heaven, it was said, was like a grain of mustard seed. The world of spirit and the world of matter are alike full of such seeds, full of the germs of living organisms, waiting for the fitting conditions in which they can take root and grow. The germ, as it unfolds, gathers its substance out of the soil in which it is rooted, and out of the atmosphere which it inhales; and it is to that soil, to that atmosphere, and to the elements of which they are composed, that we must look, if we would understand how and why at any particular time a new form of organized life makes its appearance. Critics have wearied themselves in searching for the origin of the Gospels, and arrive at nothing. They would discover the secret of the life of Christianity, and they are like children digging at the roots of a plant to discover how and why it grows. The plant withers when the root is exposed, but the network of entangled fibre tells them nothing which they desired to know. The historical facts recorded in the Gospels formed the tissue of the seed out of which the Christian Church was developed, but the tissue of the seed is not the life of it. How the Gospels were written, or when or by whom, is concealed, as the grain when growing is concealed in the earth. The life of the Church was a new ideal, a new spiritual principle to which humanity turned

for deliverance from the poison of the established theology and philosophy. In Lucian we learn what that theology and that philosophy was, and how the belief or want of belief in them was affecting intellect and morals. He has been called an apostate Christian. It is perfectly evident that he neither had been a Christian, nor, with such a mind as he possessed and at the age at which he lived, ever could have been a Christian. Two centuries later, when Christianity had become the sole authoritative teacher of practical morality, Lucian would have examined with reverential interest a doctrine which was exerting so excellent an influence over the education of the human race. In point of fact he never gave to it more than passing attention. To him it was but one of many struggling sects, an unintelligible offshoot of Judaism. He was constitutionally incredulous and the atmosphere of lies with which he was enveloped hardened further his natural distrust of new opinions. Tales of miracles and mysteries, so far from acting as inducements to command his attention, would only be occasions of suspicion. Had he even looked seriously into the Christian formulas of faith, and had found himself invited to believe that the child of a Galilean artisan had 100 years before been born of a virgin, had worked miracles, had been put to death, had gone down to Hades and had again returned to life, he would have answered that he could match the story by a hundred parallels from his own contemporary experience. Each generation produced its own swarm of pretenders to supernatural powers. Life itself would be gone before he could have examined minutely into the claims of each of them. An aged student in one of his Dialogues confessed to have spent 60 years in comparing the schools of philosophy, still hoping that he would find the truth and still unable to decide in which of them the truth was to be found. Lucian tells him that he has missed his road,

that life is action not speculation, that one good deed is better than a thousand syllogisms : and in some such terms it is likely he would have replied also, had Justin Martyr attempted to make a convert of him.

But he was not careless in such matters. He had taken exceptional pains to inquire into the claims and expose the impostures of the pretenders of his own time.

A sketch of the character of Alexander of Abonotichus, an earlier Cagliostro, is dedicated to his friend Celsus, the same Celsus who, after his death, was attacked by Origen. More interesting, from the mention in it of the Christians, is the account of the life and death of Peregrinus, whom Lucian knew and whose extraordinary end he witnessed.

This person was born in a village in Armenia. He commenced his public career, after growing to manhood, murdering his father. To conceal himself he joined the Christians at a distant town, where he became professor of exegetic theology, revised some of their sacred books, wrote others, and seemingly was made into a bishop. He was thrown into prison in one of the persecutions. The Christians behaved to him with the affection which they never failed to show to any of the brethren in distress. They raised subscriptions for him ; they brought him food ; widows and orphans watched about his cell, and with the jailer's connivance shared the solitude of his confinement. At length he was released, but the sacred character which he had assumed sat uneasily upon him. His disease was a passion for notoriety, Lucian says that he shocked the Christians by eating forbidden food ; more likely he developed some new form of heresy, He was excommunicated, or at any rate he was expelled from the Church, and joined the Cynic philosophers. In this capacity he went to Rome, where he achieved a new celebrity by the insolence of his tongue. He assailed Marcus

Aurelius himself with his ribaldry. The wise emperor rewarded him with the impunity of a privileged fool, and the public, to whom there is no pleasure greater than to hear good men sneered at and libelled, for a time applauded the libeller. But the novelty wore off. Peregrinus was again sinking into a neglect which he could not endure. To rouse the interest of men once more he announced that at the next Olympian Festival he would give the world a lesson in the contempt of death, and would publicly burn himself. He expected that his admirers would interfere, but curiosity or indifference kept them silent. He had committed himself and was too vain to retract. The pile was raised. The fire was kindled. Peregrinus leapt into it and perished. Lucian, who was himself present, being eagerly questioned as to what had taken place by one of the martyr's disciples, answered a fool according to his folly, and told him that an eagle had risen out of the flames and had soared into the sky. The story which he had himself invented passed at once into the popular belief, and was afterwards retailed to him by another spectator, who declared that he had witnessed the extraordinary portent with his own eyes.

After such experience Lucian was not likely to give easy credence to tales of miracles, and Christianity had not attained in his lifetime a position of the commanding importance which would have induced him to study its meaning with real attention.

He was born at Samosata, not far from Antioch, about the year 130 A.D. His father was a sculptor, and Lucian was intended for the same pursuit. In a sketch which he calls 'A Dream,' he describes his difficulties in the choice of his profession under the familiar shape of the two Fairies. The Genius of mechanical art and the Genius of intellectual culture each work upon him their powers of persuasion. The first promised him employ-



ment and competence. the second promised him poverty and wisdom. He had shown special gifts as a child for modelling in clay. Had he been contented with a narrow career he might have achieved the eminence with which the first fairy tempted him. But he chose the nobler and higher course. He left his mallet and chisel. He travelled : he practised as a lawyer. He studied in the schools of philosophy at Athens. His life was honorably innocent, and if the fairy kept her word about poverty, Lucian seems never to have seriously suffered from it. The minuteness of the description of the situation suggests that he was at one time a dependent on some wealthy Roman patron. A Roman noble in the second century thought his establishment incomplete without a domestic philosopher to amuse his guests, correct his verses, and applaud his witticisms ; and men of genius who might have been distinguished accepted the degrading position for the convenient ease which it held out to them. Lucian, as a warning to a friend who was meditating such a step for himself, describes what he is to expect. A young man gains a reputation at college. The world takes notice of him. A great man invites him to dinner, and the entertainment is got up specially on his behalf. He finds himself in a saloon more splendid than he had ever seen. He is uneasy in his chair. The dishes are strange to him. He does not know how to eat, or sit, or use his napkin. He watches his neighbors. He dreads the ridicule of the servants. His health is drunk, and he has to make a speech. He stammers through it in misery, drinks more than is good for him, and wakes the next morning sick and miserable. But he has given satisfaction. He is taken into the great house, and is envied by his friends for his supposed good fortune. Lucian traces sadly his downward progress, after sacrificing his liberty and self-respect to a low desire for

luxurious living. His intellect becomes debased. He forgets the little that he knew. He ceases to entertain his master, and is discarded for a new favorite. Having lost courage to encounter the hardships of independence, he is content to remain a neglected parasite of a patron who has forgotten his existence, He is set to travel in the same carriage with my lady's maid, and is charged with the care of my lady's pug dog.

If Lucian ever himself made an experiment of this gilded slavery, he resumed his freedom before he had allowed it to injure him. He rose to be the friend and equal of the chosen few of his age whose good opinion was best worth possessing. In mature life he was appointed by Marcus Aurelius to a high civil post in Egypt, and lived to be a very old man. His writings are not voluminous, but they belong to the rare class which will be read with delight as long as human nature remains unchanged; and to us, in the present speculative condition of our minds, and confronted with problems so like those which troubled Lucian's contemporaries, they have an exceptional and peculiar interest.

Of the true nature of our existence on this planet, of the origin of our being, and of the meaning and purpose of it; of what is life and what is death; and of the nature of the rule which is exerted over us, we really know nothing. We live merely on the crust or rind of things. The inner essence is absolutely concealed from us. But though these questions admit of no conclusive answer, there is something in our character which perpetually impels us to seek for an answer. Hope and fear, conscience and imagination, suggest possibilities, and possibilities become probabilities when allied with high and noble aspirations. We feel the action upon us of forces which we cannot see. The world in which we live we perceive to be moving in obedience to some vast

overmastering power. We connect our inward emotions with what we outwardly perceive. Observation of facts creates a scheme or form into which our own souls infuse a spirit, and thus arise theogonies or theologies which for a series of ages seize possession of human belief, take control of conduct, and silence, if they fail to satisfy, the questionings of the intellect.

Such, undoubtedly, however degraded they became, was once the pagan religions. Incredible and absurd as they appear on first acquaintance with them, they reveal, when inspected more closely, essential facts at the heart of them. They reveal generally a rude observation of the simplest astronomical phenomena, a recognition of the mysterious character of physical life, a perception of the eternal difference between nobleness and baseness of conduct, and they contain vague aspirations after immortality.

The convictions and opinions thus honestly formed clothed themselves in a dress of myth and allegory, and the imaginative costume was no more than a graceful drapery of ideas which were easily seen through. But knowledge outgrew its infant cycle. Imagination flowed in new channels, and no longer pursued the sacred legend to its source. Poetry became prose. The picturesque fable became a literal fact, and when claiming to be a fact became a mischievous lie. The loves of the gods and goddesses, transparent symbols of the workings of natural forces, became demoralizing examples of vice. The system without the clue to its meaning was no longer credible, and the conflict began between piety, which dreaded to be irreverent in refusing to believe, and conscience, which dared not profess upon the lips a creed which was felt to be false.

Under such conditions the keenest intellects are brought once more face to face with the limits of attainable knowledge. The problems

to which faith had provided an answer are again recognized as insoluble as soon as the faith has disappeared ; and the painful questions have again to be wrestled with, which had been concealed behind the accepted traditions of healthier and happier ages.

If we may judge from the prevailing tone of modern popular literature, from the loud avowals of incredulity on one side and the lamentations on the other on the spread of infidel opinions, it seems as if, after sixteen hundred years of satisfied belief, which came in with Christianity, we were passing once more into a cycle of analogous doubts ; and the sentiments of so robust a thinker as Lucian under the same trials are the footprints of a friend who has travelled before us the road on which we are entering. We hear him telling us in every sentence to keep a sound heart in us ; to tell no lies ; to do right whatever may befall us ; never to profess to believe what we know that we do not believe ; to look phantoms in the face, and to be sure that they cannot hurt us if we are true to ourselves.

But Lucian must speak for himself. We offer our readers a translation of one out of his many Dialogues, not as more celebrated than the rest, or as exceptionally superior ; but as being the most characteristic on the special subject of which we have been speaking. It may be called *The Twilight of the Gods* of paganism. It describes the dismay in the Pantheon when the Olympian divinities perceived that men were ceasing to believe in them, and were affected with the ludicrous alarm that if not believed in they might cease to exist.

The scene opens in heaven. Zeus is seen walking up and down, muttering to himself ; others of the gods, perceiving that he is uneasy, approach him to learn what is amiss.

The Dialogue begins theatrically, iambs and hexameters alternating.



SCENE.—*Heaven.*

*ZEUS in the foreground. Enter HERMES, ATHENE, and HERE.*

*Hermes.*—What ails you, Zeus? Why do you mutter so?

Why pale and greensick pace you to and fro,  
Like a philosopher? Impart you grief;  
A sympathizing friend may lend relief.

*Athene.*—Aye, my dear father Kronion, my prince, my monarch of monarchs,  
I thy gray-eyed daughter, thy Triton-born, kneeling beseech thee,  
Speak. Conceal it no longer, the sorrow that weighs on thy spirit;  
Why dost thou sigh so deeply, and why is thy countenance troubled?

*Zeus.*—There is no agony, no wrong, no ill  
Of such o'ermastering potency, but still  
An immortal God may brave it if he will.

*Athene.*—Great Heaven, what words! what next are we to fear?

*Zeus.*—Oh wretches, wretches, spawn of sin and earth!  
Oh to what woe, Prometheus, gav'st thou birth!

*Athene.*—What is it? Tell us; none but friends are here.

*Zeus.*—Oh ye loud echoing thunders, ye lightnings, burst from the cloud bank.

*Athene.*—Moderate these wild storms. Euripides fails us.

We are unskilled in these rhymes; and cannot keep pace with you.

*Here.*—You suppose we do not understand what is the matter.  
You presume too much on our simplicity.

*Zeus.*—Didst thou but know, thou wouldst be sad as I.

*Here.*—I know generally. You are in love again, and practice has taught me to be patient. You have found another Semele, or Europa, or Danae. You are going to make a bull of your-

self again, or a Satyr, or a shower of gold to run through the roof into the beloved's bosom. There are the usual symptoms, sighs, tears, and pale cheeks ; all undoubted tokens of love.

*Zeus.*—Sweet creature ! and you think I am disturbed by trifles like these.

*Here.*—What else can it be then ? You, the supreme God, in serious trouble !

*Zeus.*—I tell you, Here, we are all in trouble. Our very existence as Gods is in peril. It stands on the edge of a razor, as men say, whether we are to be honored as we have been, or to be neglected and turn into nothing.

*Here.*—Has a new race of giants been born ? Have the Titans broken prison and taken arms again ?

*Zeus.*—Ah, no, not that. There is no fear on that side.

*Here.*—On what side then ? What imaginable danger can be threatening us ?

*Zeus.*—Only yesterday, my Here, only yesterday, Timocles the Stoic and Damis the Epicurean fell into an argument before a large and distinguished audience on the nature of Providence. Timocles was on our side. Damis maintained either that we had no existence, or, at least, that we had no influence over human affairs. The argument was not concluded, but the disputants separated agreeing to meet again and finish it, and all the world is in a fever to know which of the two will win. You see the danger. We depend on a single man, either to continue as we are, or to sink into mere names.

*Here.*—A serious affair, no doubt. I don't wonder that you are uneasy.

*Zeus.*—And you thought it was only a fresh Danae ! Ah well ! But what is to be done ? You, Hermes, Athene, Here, give me your opinion.

*Hermes.*—If I were you I would bring it before Parliament. Call the General Assembly.

*Here.*—My advice is the same.

*Athene.*—It is not mine, father. I would not make a scandal and let the world see that I was alarmed. Surely we can arrange that Timocles shall beat Damis, and have the best of the argument.

*Hermes.*—That is not so easy. We shall be found out, and if we interfere in a matter personal to ourselves we shall be thought unconstitutional.

*Zeus.*—Hermes is right. Call the Parliament. Let all the Gods attend.

*Hermes.*—Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! All the Gods are required to meet now for important business in the General Assembly.

*Zeus.*—Use better language, Hermes. Your proclamation is too bare and inadequate.

*Hermes.*—How would you have it, Zeus?

*Zeus.*—How would I have it? I would have it set out with metre and grandeur, and a poetic dignity equal to the weight of the occasion. The Gods, won't stir for prose.

*Hermes.*—Where is a bard to be found? I am no poet. My lines will halt with uneven lengths, and you will laugh at me. Why, now and then you laugh at the verses of Apollo himself; though his oracles are so mystifying that you hardly think of his metre.

*Zeus.*—Take a proclamation out of Homer. I daresay you remember lines enough for that.

*Hermes.*—I shall not make a good job of it, but I will try.

Come each masculine God, and come each feminine  
also,

Come every single River, except Oceanus only,

Come each Nymph and each Faun, come all to the Hall  
of Assembly.

All who can challenge a right to share in the banquet of  
Heaven.

You, the inferior orders, the middle and lower classes,  
Seat yourselves under the salt, where the steam ascends  
from the altar.

*Zeus.*—Good, Hermes, good! Here they  
come. [*Enter Gods from all sides of Heaven.*]

Place them in order of merit. The gold Gods first, then the silver, then the ivory, bronze, and stone; and give precedence to any work of Phidias, or Alcamenes, or Myron, or Euphrenor, or other artist of distinction. The rank and file must stay together at a distance, being here only to fill the Hall.

*Hermes.*—Your directions shall be obeyed. But stay; suppose a hideous gold idol comes, weighing many talents. Is he to rank above the marble and bronze of Phidias? How is that to be?

*Zeus.*—You must observe the rule. Gold ranks first.

*Hermes.*—I perceive—we are a plutocracy, not an aristocracy. This way the gold Gods! this way to the reserved benches! Bah! they are all barbarians. The Greeks are beautiful—they are faultless in form and feature—but the most precious of them are only ivory. The few of gilt wood are rotten, with a colony of mice in their entrails. Bardis and Atys, and Mithras, and Men are of solid substantial bullion.

*Posidon.*—Do you mean to say, Hermes, that this dog-faced Egyptian rascal is to sit above me?

*Hermes.*—So it is ordered, my shaker of the earth. The Corinthians had no gold to spare, and Iysippus made you of bronze. The Egyptian is above you by whole metallic degrees. Look at his snout—and real gold too! You ought to be proud to sit under such a god.

*Aphrodite.*—You will give me a front seat, at any rate, Hermes? All the world calls me golden.

*Hermes.*—I cannot see it, my dear. You appear to me to have been cut from the quarry at Pentelicus. By the grace of Praxiteles you became Aphrodite, and were sold to the Cnidians.

*Aphrodite.*—But I call Homer to witness. He calls me golden a hundred times.

*Hermes.*—So Homer calls Apollo golden;



but there Apollo sits on the lower form. Thieves have stolen his gold crown and his lute strings, and you may sit by him and be thankful that you are not among the maid-servants.

*Colossus of Rhodes.*—Who is the equal of me? I am the first of gods, for I am the biggest. My friends at Rhodes made me so. I cost as much as sixteen gold gods of average size. That is what I am worth, and there is the art besides.

*Hermes.*—What am I to do here, your Majesty? The substance of him is bronze, no doubt; but take him at his money value, and he must be among the upper ten.

*Zeus (aside).*—What is he doing here, disturbing the assembly and making the rest of us look small?—My best of Rhodians, we are aware how precious you are; but if I place you among the gold gods, they must all move to make room for you, and you must sit by yourself. You fill the Pnyx with one of your thighs. Will you kindly stand? You can stoop when you want to hear.

*Hermes.*—Another difficulty. Here are Dionysus and Hercules, both of first-rate workmanship; both by the same artist Lysippus; both sons of your own. Which is to sit first of them? They are at words about it.

*Zeus.*—We waste time, Hermes. We should have been at work long since. Let them sit any way for the present; we can settle their precedence afterwards.

*Hermes.*—Hercules!—what a noise they make! ‘Where is the nectar?’ cries one. ‘The ambrosia is out,’ cries another. ‘The hecatombs are not fairly divided,’ says a third; ‘they are meant for all of us; share and share alike!’

*Zeus.*—Tell them to be quiet, Hermes. I must now inform them why they are assembled.

*Hermes.*—Half of them won’t understand

me. I can speak no language but Greek, and here are Scythians, Persians, Thracians, and I know not who. I will sign to them with my hand.

*Zeus.*—Do so.

*Hermes.*—They are mute as sophists. Speak away; they are all attention to hear what is coming.

*Zeus.*—Oh! my son, my son, what am I to do? You know how ready I generally am on these occasions.

*Hermes.*—That I do. You terrify me sometimes when you talk so bigly of hanging us all, and earth and sea to boot, on that gold chain of yours.

*Zeus.*—And now—whether it be the occasion, or all this crowd of gods, I know not—but I have forgot my speech. I had prepared it carefully, with a splendid exordium, and I can't remember a word.

*Hermes.*—This is ruin. Every eye is fixed on you. Your silence makes them expect wonders.

*Zeus.*—Shall I start with the established line from Homer,

Hear me, all ye Gods, and all ye Goddesses also?

*Hermes.*—Nonsense. I made mess enough with Homer. Do as the orators do; take the opening of one of Demosthenes' Philippics, altering a word or two.

*Zeus.*—Aye, that will do. A few well-turned expressions and we are all right. Here goes:—

The most splendid present which I could bestow upon you gentlemen Gods,\* would be less acceptable in your present disposition than an explanation of the cause for which I have now assembled you together. I must beseech you, therefore, to attend to the words

<sup>1</sup> ὦ ἄνδρες θεοὶ instead of the ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι. The humor is lost in the translation.

which I am about to utter. The time in which we are living, gentlemen, calls upon us to exert ourselves with a voice all but articulate, and we sit still in negligent indifference—— But my Demosthenes has run out. Let me tell you plainly what is the matter. Yesterday, you are aware, Captain Pious gave a thank-offering for the preservation of his vessel, which was nearly foundering. Such of us as were invited were entertained at Piræus. When we broke up after dinner, I, as it was still early, strolled up into the city, meditating on the shabby provision which Captain Pious had made. Sixteen of us had sate down. On the altar there was but a single cock, and that one too old to crow. The few grains of incense were mildewed, and would not burn, and there was scarce a whiff for the nose of one of us. The wretch had promised hecatombs when he was running on the rocks. I was standing in the Porch engaged in these reflections, when I observed a crowd about the hall, some inside, some pressing about the door. I heard voices loud in contradiction. I understood at once that a couple of professors were disputing, and I determined to hear what it was about. By good luck I had a thick cloud on. I adjusted my dress, gave my beard a pull to make myself like a philosopher, and elbowed my way in. There I found a good-for-nothing scamp of an Epicurean named Damis, and the respected and excellent Stoic, Timocles, arguing together. Timocles was perspiring with eagerness, and hoarse with shouting. Damis was turning him into ridicule and driving him distracted with his coolness. The subject of discussion was ourselves. Damis maintained that we had no concern with men and their doings, and almost denied our existence. Indeed, this was what he meant, and many of his audience applauded. Timocles took our part, passionately and indignantly. He argued well of Providence. He dwelt on the order

which is observed throughout nature. He was not without his friends, but he was unequal to his work. He spoke badly. The party in favor of Damis grew larger every moment, till, seeing what was likely to happen, I ordered up Night to bring the meeting to an end, leaving them to finish the argument to-morrow. I mixed in the crowd as the people went home. I found most of them, I am sorry to say, on Damis's side; a few only remained undecided till they had heard out what Timocles had to reply. You will now, my divine friends, be no longer at a loss to understand your summons to this assembly. From men we derive our honor and glory and our revenues. Let men once conceive either that we do not exist, or that we have nothing to do with them, and victims, incense, and prayers will cease to be offered to us. We shall be left sitting idle here in Heaven, banquets and ceremonies at an end, perishing of hunger. It concerns us all, gentlemen, it concerns us all. What is to be done? How is Timocles to get the best of the argument and answer Damis sufficiently? I have no confidence in Timocles. He means well, but unless we help him he will certainly be beaten. Give the usual notice Hermes. Any God who can give advice in our present emergency, let him rise and speak.

*Hermes*.—Oyez, oyez, oyez! Order in the assembly! Any God who desires to speak is requested to stand up——What, all motionless! All struck dumb at what you have heard!

*Momus*.—

Turning each one of you all into water and clods of the valley.

If freedom of speech is permitted here, Father Zeus, I should like to make an observation.

*Zeus*.—Speak on. You have nothing to fear. We shall be delighted to hear you.



*Momus.* Listen then, Gods. I will address you, as men say, from the heart. I have long seen how things were going. It has long been evident to me that philosophers would rise up and pick holes in us. By Themis, I cannot blame Epicurus and his disciples for the conclusions at which they have arrived about us. What other conclusions could they arrive at, when they saw the confusion around them? Good men neglected, perishing in penury or slavery; and profligate wretches wealthy, honored, and powerful. Sacrilegious temple-robbers undiscovered and unpunished; devotees and saints beaten and crucified. With such phenomena before them, of course men have doubted our existence. The oracles, forsooth, ought to be an evidence to them. An oracle tells Cræsus that if he crosses the Halys, he will destroy a mighty empire; but it does not explain whether he is to destroy his enemy's empire or his own. An oracle says

Many a mother's son shall in thee, O Salamis, perish.

Mothers produce children in Greece as well as in Persia. There are the Sacred Poems. Oh yes! Poems which tell them that we have our loves and our fights; that we quarrel one with another; that some of us are in chains; that a thousand things go wrong with us, while we pretend to immortal blessedness. What can they do but hold us in contempt? We affect surprise that men who are not fools decline to put their faith in us. We ought rather to be pleased if there is a man left to say his prayers. We are among ourselves, with no strangers present. Tell us, then, Zeus, have you really ever taken pains to distinguish between good men and bad? You cannot say you have. Theseus, not you, destroyed the robbers in Attica. As far as you and Providence were concerned, Sciron and Pity-o-campus might have murdered and plundered to the end of time. If

Eurystheus had not looked into matters and sent Hercules upon his labors, little would you have troubled yourself with the Hydras and the Centaurs. Let us be candid. All that we have really cared for has been a steady altar service. Everything else has been left to chance. And now men are opening their eyes. They perceive that whether they pray or don't pray, go to church or don't go to church, makes no difference to them. And we are receiving our deserts. Our advocates are silenced. The Epicuruses and the Damises carry the world before them. If you wish mankind to reverence you again you must remove the cause of their disbelief. For myself, I care little how it goes. I was never much respected at the best of times, Now they may think as they please.

*Zeus.*—Don't mind this rude fellow. He is always so. Any one can pick holes, as the divine Demosthenes says. The difficulty is to discover what is to be done. And now that Momus has finished you will give me your suggestions.

*Posidon.*—My place, you are aware, is under water at the bottom of the sea. To the best of my ability I take care of sailors, help ships to harbors, and keep down the winds. At the same time I am not indifferent to matters here, and to prevent more trouble, I recommend you to knock Damis down with a thunderbolt. He is plausible; we shall prevent his words from gaining more hold; and we shall give a proof that we are not to be trifled with.

*Zeus.*—You jest, Posidon. Have you forgotten that the manner of every man's death is predestined for him? Do you suppose that if it had rested with me I would have let the robber escape who cut off my gold curls at Olympia, that weighed six pounds apiece? What could you do with the fisherman that stolé your trident at Geræstus? Besides, to put Damis out of the way would only show that

we were afraid of what he might say, and didn't dare to let the case he argued out.

*Posidon.*—It seems to me to be the easiest road out of the difficulty.

*Zeus.*—A most dense notion, Posidon, worthy only of a sea-pig.

*Posidon.*—If my idea is piggish, find a better of your own.

*Apollo.*—May a beardless youth venture to address the assembly?

*Momus.*—This is not a time to stand on ceremony, Apollo. You are within the law too. You have been of age these many years. Why, you are one of the twelve. I am not sure that you were not in the Privy Council in Crono's time. None of your infant airs. If your own chin is smooth, you have a son, Æsculapius here, whose beard is long enough. Give us some of that philosophy which you have learnt from the Muses in Helicon.

*Apollo.*—It does not rest with you, Momus, to give leave or refuse it. If Zeus permits, however, I may show, perhaps, that my conversation with the Muses has not been thrown away.

*Zeus.*—Say on, my child. I allow you.

*Apollo.*—This Timocles appears a worthy, pious man, and is well thought of as a professor. His lecture class is large. His fees are heavy, and he speaks fluently and convincingly among his own friends and disciples. On a public platform, unhappily, he is less satisfactory. His accent is not good. He lacks presence of mind, and is confused. He labors to produce an effect with fine words, and then he is laughed at. Those who are familiar with the Stoic formulas say that he understands his subject well enough, but he wants clearness of exposition. He loses his head when he is cross-questioned and flounders into absurdities. Now, the object is to make him speak so that he shall be comprehended.

*Momus.*—As you appreciate plainness, Ap-

ollo, it is a pity you don't practice it. Your oracles usually want another oracle to interpret them. How do you propose to cure these faults in Timocles?

*Apollo*.—Couldn't we provide a junior counsel to take Timocles's ideas and put them into words?

*Momus*.—Utterly childish. . . . A lead in an important case to be unable to express his own thoughts at a meeting of philosophers! Damis is to speak for himself. Timocles is to whisper his notions to his junior, and his junior is to find the rhetoric without understanding what he is saying. That will be too absurd. We must find a better expedient than that. My fine fellow, you are a prophet. You have made a fortune by prophesying. They have given you whole bricks of gold. Let us have a specimen of your art. Tell us what is to happen in this business. I suppose you know.

*Apollo*.—Impossible, Momus. I have neither tripod nor censers—not so much as a fountain of Castalia.

*Momus*.—You are afraid, are you? You think you will be found out.

*Zeus*.—My son, you had better do it. Don't let this caviller mock at you—as if your inspiration depended on your tacking.

*Apollo*.—I could make a better business of it at Delphi or Colophon, with my instruments at hand. I will try, however, if you wish. You must allow for irregularities in the verse.

*Momus*.—Never mind the verse, old fellow—only speak intelligibly. No rams and tortoises are being boiled in Lydia to catch you. You know what we want to learn.

*Zeus*.—What is coming? The spirit works in him. My child! Oh, my child! His color changes! His eyes roll! He is convulsed! Most mysterious, most fearful!

*Apollo (in the prophetic trance)*.—  
List, oh list to my words, the words of the  
Augur Apollo,



How the dread strife shall have end which has  
now commenced among mortals,  
Mortals with voices shrill, and armed with the  
weapons of logic.

Many a blow shall be struck as the foemen  
close in the battle ;

Many a blow shall be dealt in the solid wood  
of the plough-tail.

But when the locust is caught in the mighty  
gripe of the vulture,

Then shall be heard the last croak of the om-  
inous wet-boding raven.

Then shall the mule be strong and the jackass  
shall butt at his offspring.

*Zeus.*—Why do you laugh, Momus ? It is  
no laughing matter. Stop, you sinner ; you  
will choke yourself.

*Momus.*—What can I do but laugh at so  
simple a prophet ?

*Zeus.*—If you understand the oracle, tell us  
what it means.

*Momus.*—What the oracle means ; Why, it  
means that the prophet is a humbug, and that  
we who believe in him are mules and asses,  
without the wit of a grasshopper.

*Hercules.*—I am not quite at home up here—  
but I don't like to say nothing. What I think  
is this. Let the philosophers meet and argue.  
If Timocles has the best of it, well and good—  
nothing more need be done. If Timocles is  
beaten I will pull down the hall on Damis's  
head, and make an end of the miserable  
creature.

*Momus.*—Hercules, dear Hercules, most  
rustic of Bœotians ! To punish one bad man  
you will destroy a thousand, and the hall besides,  
with the frescoes of Miltiades and Marathon.  
What is to become of the orators when the  
fountain of their illustrations is gone ? Besides,  
you can't do it. When you were a man you  
perhaps might, for you did not understand the  
condition of things. Now that you are a God

you are aware, are you not ; that these matters are pre-arranged by the Fates ?

*Hercules to Zeus.*—Is this true, sir ? when I killed the Lion and the Hydra, was it the Fates that killed them, and not I ?

*Zeus.*—Not a doubt of it.

*Hercules.*—And if any one is impudent to me, or robs my temples, I may not punch his head unless the Fates please ;

*Zeus.*—Indeed, you must not.

*Hercules.*—With your permission then, Zeus I will make an observation. I am a plain man, and call a spade a spade, as the poet says. If this is to be a god, may you long enjoy your blessed condition. For myself I will go to Hades with my bow and hunt the ghosts of the monsters which I slew when I was alive.

*Zeus.*—Out of our own mouths we stand convicted. We may spare Damis the trouble. [But who comes here in such a hurry ?]

*Enter HERMAGENES.*

This bronze youth with his hair in the style of the last century. It is your brother, Hermes. Your brother that stands in the Agora, next the Pœkile. He is covered with pitch. The statuaries have been moulding upon him. What brings you here, my son ? Is anything wrong ?

*Hermagenes.*—Indeed there there is, Zeus, wrong with a vengeance.

*Zeus.*—What is it ? a revolution in Athens ? We ought to have been informed of it.

*Hermagenes.*—The founders' men were with me. 'Twas but now  
They smeared me round with resin, back and brow ;

Thick coated was I, and the rind or peel  
Bore my correct impression like a seal.  
Just then a crowd came by, and in the midst  
Two pale, loud-screaming, wordy pugilists,  
Damis and—

*Zeus.*—Not another word of your tragedy, my dear Hermagenes ; I know the men. Has the fight begun ?

*Hermagenes.*—Not yet in earnest. They are skirmishing, pelting each other with words at a distance.

*Zeus.*—We will go down and hear. Draw the bolts ! pull up the cloud curtains ! open the gates of Heaven ! Hercules ! what a multitude ! Timocles looks ill : he shakes ; he is no match for Damis, I fear. We can help him with our prayers at any rate. Softly, however, lest Damis hear.

*Scene changes to the Theatre at Athens. The benches crowded with citizens. TIMOCLES and DAMIS on the stage ; and the GODS, invisible to the audience, looking on.*

*Timocles.*—What ! you blasphemous villain, you ! you don't believe in the Gods and in Providence ?

*Damis.* I see no proof of their existence. I wait your reasons why I should have a positive opinion about it.

*Timocles.* I will give you no reasons, you wretch. Give me yours for your atheism.

*Zeus.*—Our man is doing well. He has the rudest manner and the loudest voice. Well done, Timocles ! give him hard words. That is your strong point. Begin to reason and you will be as dumb as a fish.

*Timocles.*—By Athene, you shall have no reasons from me.

*Damis.*—Very well then ; ask me questions and I will answer them. Don't use foul language if you can help it.

*Timocles.*—Speak then you accursed monster. Do you or do you not believe in Divine Providence ?

*Damis.*—I do not.

*Timocles.*—What ? Do you mean that the Gods do not foresee future events ?

*Damis.*—I do not know that they do.

*Timocles.*—And there is no divine order in the universe?

*Damis.*—None that I am aware of.

*Timocles.*—And the world is not governed by reason and intelligence?

*Damis.*—I do not perceive that it is.

*Timocles.*—Will you bear this, good people? Will you not stone the blasphemer?

*Damis.*—Why inflame the people against me, Timocles? The Gods show no displeasure. They have heard me (if hear they do) without interposing. Why should you be so fierce in their behalf?

*Timocles.*—They hear you. They hear you. They will give it to you by and by.

*Damis.*—They will not have much leisure to bestow on me if they are so busy as you say, Timocles, managing the universe. They have not punished you for certain perjuries that I have heard of. I will not go into particulars, but they could scarcely have a better opportunity of vindicating their existence than by bringing you to question. They are away across the ocean, perhaps, among the Æthiopians. They dine there frequently on their own invitation, do they not?

*Timocles.*—What reply can I make to such horrible irreverence?

*Damis.*—You can give me the reply for which I have been so long waiting. You can tell me why you yourself believe in Providence.

*Timocles.*—I believe in it first on account of the order which is visible throughout the universal scheme of things. The sun and moon move in their allotted path; the seasons revolve; the plants spring; the animals come to the birth, and are organized with exquisite skill. Man, yet more wonderful than they, thinks and acts and makes shoes and builds houses—all evident proofs of design and purpose.

*Damis.*—You beg the question, Timocles.



You have not proved that things are as they are by design. What is, is. That it has been so ordered by Providence is no sure conclusion. Once there may have been disorder where there is now order. You look at the universe as it exists, you examine the movements of it, you admire them, you assume that those movements were intended, and you fly into a passion with those who cannot agree with you; but passion is not argument, as they say in the play. What is the second reason for your belief?

*Timocles*.—There is no need of a second; but you shall have no excuse for your impiety. You allow that Homer is the first of poets?

*Damis*.—I do.

*Timocles*.—Well, then, Homer says that there is a Providence, and I believe Homer.

*Damis*.—My excellent friend, Homer may be a first-rate poet, but neither he nor any of his kind are authorities on matters of fact. The object of poetry is to amuse, not to instruct. Poets arrange their words in metre, they invent legends out of their imagination, they desire to give their hearers pleasure, and that is all. But to what passages in Homer do you refer? He tells us, if I remember, that the wife and brothers and daughter of Jupiter conspired to dethrone and imprison him, and that if Thetis had not called in the help of Briareus they would have succeeded. He tells us that Jupiter, to reward Thetis, cheated Agamemnon with a false dream, and that tens of thousands of Achæans perished in consequence. Or you believe, perhaps, because Athene set on Diomed to wound Aphrodite and Ares, because the whole celestial company fell afterwards into fighting one with another; then Ares, who I suppose had not recovered from his hurt, was thrashed by Athene, and

Up against Leto arose the doughty champion Hermes.

Or you have been convinced by the story about Artemis. Artemis was angry because Ceneus had not asked her to dinner, and sent a monstrous boar to ravage the country. These, I presume, are the illustrations of divine power mentioned by Homer which you have found so satisfactory.

[*Applause from all parts of the Theatre.*

*Zeus.*—Bless me, how they cheer; and our fellow is looking over his shoulder. . . . He trembles. He will drop his shield in a moment, and run.

*Timocles.*—Euripides brings the Gods upon the very stage. He shows them in the act of rewarding good heroes, and punishing wretches like you. Is Euripides mistaken too?

*Damis.*—Most wise philosopher, if you argue from the stage, why then the actors Polus, Aristodemus, Satyrus must be Gods; or perhaps it is their masks, and boots, and shawls, and gloves and false stomachs? When Euripides speaks his own opinion, he says:

Thou see'st the æther, stretching infinite,  
Enveloping the earth in moist embrace,  
This—this is Zeus—this is the Deity.

And again:

Zeus be Zeus whate'er he may,  
I know but what the legends say,

with more to the same purpose.

*Timocles.*—Then the multitudes of men and nations who have believed in the existence of the Gods, and have worshipped them, have all been deceived?

*Damis.*—Thank you for reminding me of national religious customs. Nothing exhibits more plainly the foundations on which theology is built. There is one religion on one side of a border, and another on the other. The Scythian worships Acinaces, the Thracian a slave, Zalmoxis, who escaped from Samos. The Phrygian adores the moon or the month; the

Æthiopian the day. The Cyllenian prays to Phanes; the Assyrian to a dove; the Persians to fire; the Egyptians to water. At Memphis a bull is a god; at Pelusium an onion. Elsewhere in Egypt they worship an ibis, a crocodile, a cat, a monkey, a dog-headed ape. In some villages the right shoulder is sacred, in others the left; in others a skull cut in half; in others a bowl or a plate. Do you really mean, Timocles, that such things are a serious proof that the Gods exist?

*Momus (to the Gods).*—I warned you, my friends, that there would be an inquiry into these matters, and that the truth would come out.

*Zeus.*—You did so, and you were right, Momus. If we survive our present trouble I will try to mend them.

*Timocles.*—Oh, thou enemy of God! what dost thou say to oracles and prophecies? Whence come they, save from divine foreknowledge.

*Damis.*—To what oracles do you refer? You mean, I presume, the answer that Cræsus got from the Pythoness, for which he paid so dearly, that ruined him and his city. An oracle with a double face, like the statues of Hermes.

*Momus.*—Exactly what I most feared. Where is our soothsayer? Go in, Apollo, and answer for yourself.

*Zeus.*—'Sdeath, Momus, this is no time for irony.

*Timocles.*—Seest thou not, thou sinner thou, that thy arguments will make an end of Church and Altar?

*Damis.*—Not all Churches and not all Altars, Timocles. We will let the Altars stand where they burn only incense. Of the Shrine of our Lady in Tauris I would not leave a stone.

*Zeus.*—Frightful. The fellow spares none of us. He speaks as if from the back of a wagon, and curses you all in a heap, alike the guilty and guiltless,

*Momus.*—Not many of us can plead not guilty, Zeus. Wait ; he will strike higher presently. (*A thunderstorm.*)

*Timocles.*—Dost thou hear, thou impious Damis? Dost thou hear the voice of Zeus himself?

*Damis.*—I hear the thunder ; but whether it be the voice of Zeus you know better than I. You have been in Heaven, I presume, and have seen him. Travelers from Crete tell me they show his grave in that island. If he has been long dead, I do not perceive how he can be thundering.

*Momus.*—I knew he would say that ; I was sure of it. You change color, Zeus. Your teeth chatter. Pluck up your spirits. Never mind what these monkeys say.

*Zeus.*—Never mind ! It is very well to say never mind. Don't you see that Damis has the whole Hall with him?

*Momus.*—Let down that gold chain of yours, and drag them all up in the air with earth and ocean together.

*Timocles.*—Have you ever been at sea, miserable man?

*Damis.*—Many times, Timocles.

*Timocles.*—And did not the wind in the sails help you more than the rowers? And was there not a pilot at the helm to keep the vessel true upon its course?

*Damis.*—Assuredly.

*Timocles.*—The ship could not reach its port without a pilot ; and the ship of the Universe, you think, requires neither captain nor helmsman?

*Zeus.*—Well put, Timocles. A good illustration that.

*Damis.*—Most inspired Timocles, the captain you speak of arranges his plans beforehand. He settles his course and adheres to it. His men are all in order and obey his word of command. Spars, ropes, chains, oars are on board in their places, and ready to his hand,



But the great captain of the Universe shows none of this forethought. The forestay is made fast to the stern, and the sheets to the bow. The anchors are sometimes of gold, and the bulwarks of lead. The bottom is painted and carved: the upper works are plain and unsightly. The crew are disposed at random; the craven fool is a commissioned officer; the swimmer is sent aloft to man the yards; the skilled navigator to work at the pumps. As to the passengers—knaves sit at the captain's table; honest men are huddled into corners. Socrates and Aristides and Phocion lie on the bare boards, without room to stretch their feet, and without food enough to eat. Callias and Midas and Sardanapalus revel in luxury, and look down on the rest of mankind. This is the state of your ship, Timocles, and it explains the number of shipwrecks. Had there been a captain in command, he would have distinguished the good from the bad, have promoted worth and capacity, and have set vice and folly in the place belonging to it. The able seaman would be master or lieutenant; the skulker and poltroon would be tied to the triangles. In short, my friend, if your ship has had a commander, he has not been fit for his place, and there is need of a revolution.

*Momus.*—Damis is sailing with wind and stream direct into victory.

*Zeus.*—It is so indeed. Timocles produces nothing but common-places, and one after another they are overturned.

*Timocles.*—As the example of the ship does not convince you, I will give you one more argument, the last, the best, the sheet-anchor of theology.

*Zeus.*—What is he going to say?

*Timocles.*—Attend to the positions as they follow one from the other, and discover a flaw if you can. If there are altars, then there must be Gods. But there are altars, therefore there

are Gods. There, what say you now? Laughing? What is there to amuse you?

*Damis.*—My dear friend, I doubt if this sheet-anchor of yours will stand. You hang the existence of the Gods on the existence of altars, and you fancy the link will hold; but if this is your last position, we may as well close the discussion.

*Timocles.*—You admit that you are vanquished.

*Damis.*—Of course; you have taken refuge at the altar as men do in extremities. On that altar and in the name of your sheet-anchor we will swear a truce, and contend no more.

*Timocles.*—Oh! oh! you are sarcastic, are you! you grave-digger! you wretch! you abomination! you jail-bird! you cess-pool! we know where you came from; your mother was a whore; and you killed your brother and seduced your friend's wife; you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a glutton, and a beast. Stay till I can thrash you. Stay, I say, villain, abhorred villain!

*Zeus.*—One has gone off laughing, and the other follows railing and throwing tiles at him. Well, what are we to do?

*Hermes.*—The old play says, you are not hurt if you don't acknowledge it. Suppose a few people have gone away believing in Damis, what then? A great many more believe the reverse; and the whole mass of uneducated Greeks and the barbarians everywhere.

*Zeus.*—True, Hermes, but that was a good thing which Darius said about Zopyrus. 'I had rather have one Zopyrus than a thousand Babylons.'

## DIVUS CÆSAR.

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THE 'Pharsalia' of Lucan is a passionate imprecation on the destroyers of the Roman constitution. The Gods had permitted that in this world the enemies of liberty should triumph. Struggling for consolation, the young patriot persuades himself that perhaps in another world the balance may be redressed. With the aid of the witch Erictho, he reanimates the corpse of a lately killed soldier. The livid lips describe the forging in hell of the adamantine chains which are to bind Cæsar to the crags of an infernal Caucasus. The poet bids the champions of the Republic make haste to die, that in Tartarus they may trample under foot the tyrants whom Rome was adoring as divinities. At other moments the future seems as hopeless to him as the present. He flings the guilt upon the Olympians themselves, and finds no comfort save in the hope that they may suffer retribution at the hands of the common usurpers. The Gods had forgotten to be just, and their power would be taken from them. The civil carnage would raise mortals to the throne of heaven, their hands armed with lightnings and their brows crowned with stars.

As his last and practical conviction, Lucan seems to have concluded that from Gods of any kind no redress was to be looked for.

*Victrix causa Deis placuit sed victa Catoni.*

Justice was in man or it was nowhere. If crime was to be avenged, it must be on earth and by a human hand. He sacrificed his life, while only in his 28th year, in an abortive conspiracy against Nero, and along with his life the extraordinary gifts which his frenzied passion could not wholly spoil.

Throughout his poem a confidence that the right cause ought to triumph struggles with a misgiving that, in the administration of the universe, no moral purpose is discoverable. Perhaps it was in irony, perhaps it was in sad conviction that the Gods—if Gods there were—were no better than Nero, that he addressed the emperor in the amazing lines with which he opens his subject.

After describing the desolation which Cæsar's wars had spread over the Roman world, he proceeds :

But if no other means the fates could find  
To give us Nero—if the Thunderer's self  
Could reign but when the Giant's wars were done,  
We then, oh Gods, complain not. For such boon  
Our trampled laws, our violated rights,  
Woe, sacrilege, crime, we gladly bear them all.  
Strew thy dread plains, Pharsalia, with the slain.  
Spirits of fallen Carthage, sate your thirst  
With Latin blood on Munda's fatal field.  
Famish Perusium, perish Mutina,  
Fleets drift to wreck on Leucas' iron crags,  
And battles rage 'neath Ætna's blazing crest.  
Yet Rome is still a debtor to the Gods  
When she has thee. To thee, when late thou goest,  
Thine earthly sojourn ended, to the stars,  
The Heavenly palaces will fling wide the gates,  
The Gods will lay their sceptres at thy feet  
And bid thee choose among them. Wilt thou reign  
Monarch supreme? Wilt thou prefer to guide  
The car of Phœbus? Earth will know no fears  
From change of lords beneath thy sure command;  
And each divinity to thine must yield.  
This only grant, that when the choice is made,  
And thou art fixed in thy august dominion,  
Seek not a throne within the icy North,  
Incline not to the low-sunk Southern sky,  
From whence on Rome thy beams askance may fall.  
Too near the Poles thy overmastering weight  
Will strain the nice poised balance of the world.



Dwell in the Zenith, where each rival light  
 Shall pale in thine and thou shalt shine alone.  
 Then shall the mists melt from the face of Heaven,  
 The sword fall blunted from the warrior's hand,  
 And peace shall reign and Janus' gates be closed.

Me now inspire, in this my enterprise.  
 With thee within my breast I shall not need  
 To sue the Pythian God for mystic fire;  
 In thee alone a Roman bard will find  
 Fit aid at need to sing a Roman song.

Many explanations may be given of this extraordinary language, yet no one of them is wholly satisfactory. When the deification of Claudius was voted by the Senate, Lucan's uncle, Seneca, had written a farce on this occasion, the ἀποκολοκύντῳσις, or translation of the late emperor into the society of pumpkins. Lucas's lines may be conceived to have been written in a similar spirit of mockery. Claudius, however, was dead when he was turned into ridicule. Nero was alive, and was not a person with whom it was safe to take liberties. Call it adulation! But adulation of the Cæsars was the last quality to be expected in the 'Pharsalia' or its author. Let it have been conventionality; but there will remain to be explained the popular sentiment to which conventional language is necessarily addressed. How could educated Romans, who were still punctilious in observing the traditionary forms of the established religion, either utter or tolerate language which appeared like a satire upon religion itself? The elevation of illustrious mortals, when their earthly labors were over, to a throne among the stars had been for ages a familiar conception. The Twins glittered in the Zodiac among the August Twelve. Hercules, Perseus, and Orion displayed in the nightly sky the rewards prepared in heaven for the deeds which they have accomplished as men. Quirinus, the mythic founder of Rome, remained the tutelary guardian of the Roman people. The spirits of heroic warriors, incorporated in jewelled constellations, spread

over the surface of the entire celestial sphere. That the great dead should have a home among the Gods was a natural and reasonable expectation. But never till the days of the Roman Empire had men been found to say of a man like themselves, still living among them, still subjected to the conditions of mortality, 'He is but waiting till he passes from the earth for the Gods to abdicate and leave the choice to him of the vacant thrones in heaven.'

For Nero it must be said that he was but accepting honors which had been already claimed by Caius Caligula, and which had been offered by the Senate to the least arrogant of his predecessors; for Lucan, again, was but repeating a note which had been struck already by a poet of an incomparably higher order. Augustus was studiously simple—careful to conceal the power which he really possessed behind constitutional forms, and sternly contemptuous of idle flattery. Horace, of all men of intellect that ever lived, was the least likely to condescend to extravagant and unmeaning compliments. Horace was not religious, but he never mocked at religion. Long indifferent to such considerations, he tells us, half seriously, that late in life he had been frightened back into belief. In the grandest of his odes, he refers the miseries of Rome to forgetfulness of the Gods, and he warns his countrymen that the sins of their fathers will continue to be visited upon them till they rebuild the temples and restore the fallen shrines. Yet Horace could address Augustus with whom he was personally intimate, and with whom he continually dined, in language not less extravagant than Lucan's. Whichever of the Gods Augustus might be, whether Apollo, or Mercury, or Mars, Horace affected to believe that he was at least one of them. In pity for the wretchedness of his children, the Great Father had sent an immortal as 'a present God' to take charge of them, and to bring back the

golden age. Under the beneficent rule of Augustus, the cow did not cast her calf, the corn waved yellow over the fields, the ship sped to its port with calm seas and favoring airs, man no longer broke his faith to man, and wives were chaste, and punishment followed sin or crime. To Augustus the grateful husbandman offered his evening sacrifice after his day of toil before he retired with his family to sleep.\* What the Virgin Mary is to the modern peasant of France or Italy, such Augustus was, while still living, in the farm-house of Latium and Etruria—as real, perhaps more real, because he was ‘*præsens Divus*,’ because his rule was regarded as a ‘kingdom of God upon earth.’

Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue, which was read by Constantine’s order at the Council of Nice as an evangelical prophecy, is no more than a beautiful repetition of the same idea. In the year of Pollio’s consulship ‘unto Rome a child was born, unto Rome a son was given,’ who was to reign as a God upon earth. In his time the earth would bring forth abundantly. In his time the lion would lie down with the lamb, the infant would play on the cockatrice’s den and take no harm, and sin and sorrow would fly away. The babe for whom this brilliant horoscope was drawn was probably one of Augustus’s grandsons, who died in early youth. We need not look, at any rate, beyond the imperial family to understand and even sympathize with language which was the expression of a universal feeling.

\* Condit quisque diem collibus in suis  
Et vitem viduas ducit ad arbores,  
Hinc ad vina redit lætus et alteris ,  
Te mensis adhibet Deum.

Te multâ prece, te prosequitur mero  
Defuso pateris et Laribus tuum  
Miscet numen, uti Græcia Castoris  
Et magni memor Herculis.

Horace, *Odes*: Lib iv., Ode 5.

To a Roman who had witnessed what Italian society had become in the last days of the Republic—the incredible depravity of manners, the corruption of justice, the oppression of the provinces, the collapse of the political fabric in a succession of civil wars which had overflowed the Roman world like a sea of lava—the reign of Augustus, protracted as it was through half a century, with order restored, and life and property secure, and peace such as the earth had never known established throughout civilized mankind, may well have seemed a kingdom of heaven; and Augustus himself, from whom these real blessings appeared to flow, may have been mistaken without extravagant credulity for something more than a mere mortal.

But let us turn to what we actually know of the introduction of this singular idolatry.

The Romans, like all great peoples, were, in the earlier stages of their history, eminently religious. Their habits were frugal, their private lives were austere, moral, and wherever conduct is pure, piety springs up by an unvarying law of nature, as grass and flowers grow from a wholesome soil. Reverence for God, or the Gods, was interwoven with domestic habits and with public laws. The fact of the Gods' existence and of their sovereign rule over all things was accepted with the faith which had never heard of scepticism. The simple rites which the early Latins were called on to observe neither troubled their consciences nor perplexed their understandings. The whole duty of man lay in *virtus*—virtue, manliness; and unbelief is an infection which manly minds are the last to catch.

But they could not escape the inevitable. The Gods of Latium might perhaps be supreme in Italy; but when the authority of the republic was extended beyond the Peninsula, the conquerors encountered other nations with other creeds, and it fared with the Romans as it fared



with the Israelites among the Semitic tribes of Canaan :

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes  
Intulit agresti Latio.*

The Israelites identified Jehovah with Baal. The Greeks taught the Latins to see in their own Jupiter and Minerva and Venus, the Zeus and the Pallas and Aphrodite of Homer and Hesiod. With the new names came the impure mythology of the Hellenes; and the Latin morality, which was founded in religion, dissolved and disappeared in the presence of Deities whom it was no longer possible to respect. The cultivated Athenians could resolve their legends into allegory. The practical Romans took the letter of the mythology as they found it, and discovered that it was no longer credible. Those beings could not be Gods in any true or real sense who lived in the practice of the worst vices which their ancestors had taught them to abhor. The public ceremonial survived, but the heart had gone out of it. The fear of God departed, and morality and justice departed with it; and the ancient Latin creed underwent the fate to which all religions are condemned which are connected with partial sympathies or have risen out of imperfect knowledge.

Religions which have exerted a real influence over masses of mankind have always begun in genuine conviction. They have contained an answer to questions which men were anxiously asking at the time when they originated, and to which they appeared to give a credible reply. Once accepted, they petrify into unchanging forms. Knowledge increases; religion remains stationary. Fresh problems rise, for which they provide no solution, or a solution transparently false; and then follow the familiar phenomena of disintegration and failing sanctions and relaxed rule of action, and, along

with these, the efforts of well-meaning men to resist the irresistible—reconciliations of religion and science, natural theologies reconstructed on philosophic bases, with at intervals unavailing efforts to conceal the cracks in the theory by elaborate restorations of ritual;—or again, on the other side, the firm avowal of disbelief from the more sincere and resolute minds, such as rings out of the lines of Lucretius.

With Lucretius we are all familiar: not less interesting—perhaps more interesting, as showing the working of more commonplace intellects—is the treatise ‘On the Nature of Gods,’ which Cicero wrote almost at the same time when Lucretius was composing his poems, and which contains the opinions of the better sort of educated Romans.

That such a dialogue should have been written by a responsible and respectable person in Cicero’s position, is itself a proof that religion was at its last gasp. Tradition had utterly broken down: serious men were looking in the face the facts of their situation, and were asking from experience what rule they were living under; and experience gave, and always must give, but one reply. Men are taught to believe in an overruling Providence; they look for evidence of it, and they find that, so far as human power extends over nature there are traces of a moral government; but that it is such a government as man himself establishes for the protection of society, and nothing more. To what we call good and evil, nature as such is indifferent, and nature submits to man’s control, not as he is just or unjust, believing or sceptical, but as he understands the laws by which the operations of nature are directed. The piety of the captain does not save his ship from the reefs. He depends on his knowledge of navigation. Prayer does not avert the pestilence; but an understanding of the conditions of health. The lightning strikes the church, but spares the gambling-house provided

with a conducting-rod. Disease and misfortune, or the more mighty visitations of the earthquake, the famine, the inundation, make no distinction between the deserving and the base. The house falls and spare the fool, while it cuts short a career which might have been precious to all mankind. This is the truth so far as experience can teach; and only timidity, or ignorance, or a resolution, like that of Job's friends, to be more just than God, can venture to deny it; and thus arises the dismayed exclamation which has burst in all ages from the hearts of noble-minded men: Why are the wicked in such prosperity? Not that they envy the wicked any miserable enjoyment which they may obtain for themselves, but because they see that all things come alike to all, and that there is no difference—that as it is with the wise man, so it is with the fool; as with him that sacrifices, so with him that sacrifices not. The manifest disregard of moral distinctions discredits their confidence in Providence, and sends a shuddering misgiving through them, that no such power as a moral Providence exists anywhere beyond themselves.

Again and again in the progress of human development mankind have been forced into an unwilling recognition of the truth, and the crisis has been always a painful one. So long as religion is fully believed, the inattention of nature to impiety and immorality is compensated by the increased energy of government, and by the higher aspirations of individual men. Impiety does not escape unpunished when it is treated by the magistrate as a crime. In a society which is penetrated by a consciousness of responsibility to God morality is rewarded as such, and vice and impurity are punished as such by temporal inconveniences. When religion no longer guides the intellect or controls the conduct, society confines itself to the punishment of offences against itself. Having no longer any high consciousness of duty,

society is tolerant of profligacy which avoids the grosser forms of crime. For the rest, the magistrate exclaims cynically : *Deorum injuriæ Diis curæ*, well knowing that if the Gods' injuries are not punished by himself the offender's slumbers will be undisturbed.

So matters stood at Rome when Velleius the Epicurean, Balbus the Stoic, and Cotta the Pontifex Maximus, the Pope, the head of the national religion, the guardian of the sacred oracles, met together at Cicero's villa to discuss the nature of the Gods. The argument was opened properly by Velleius. Epicureanism was the popular creed of the day, the creed of the men of science and intellect, the creed of the poet, the artist, and the statesman. The Epicureans believed in phenomena. They held with Locke that the intellect could reason only upon facts conveyed to it through the senses, and that knowledge could not extend beyond the objects of sensible experience. The earth and all that existed upon it had been created by nature, and was governed by laws of natural causation. Nature was sovereign, and no external power can be proved to have ever interfered with it. As to the supposition that another order of beings existed somewhere superior to man, the Epicureans had no objection to acknowledge that it might be so ; they thought it rather probable than otherwise : they denied only that such beings took an interest in man.

Briefly and completely their views on this subject had been expressed by Ennius :

Ego genus esse semper dico et dixi Cœlitum,  
Sed non eos curare opinor quid agat humauum genus.  
Nam si curent, bene bonis sit malis male, quod nunc  
abest.

'I always say and have said that the race of the celestials exists, but I opine not that they concern themselves with the doings of the sons of men. Did they so concern themselves, it



would be well with the good and ill with the wicked, which now it is not.'

Men had no care for the animals which shared the earth with them. The Gods might exist, yet might care as little for men as men cared for beetles or butterflies. The admission of the possibility of such an existence was perhaps a condescension of philosophy to popular prejudice, or arose from a wish to avoid the reproach of Atheism. Yet Velleius insisted on it with an appearance of earnestness. He appealed to instinct and internal emotion as an evidence \* that somewhere in the universe were to be found beings, in a state of unbroken repose, perfect virtue, and perfect happiness, and that in the adoration of them—disinterested, because no favor was to be looked for in return—was the highest felicity of man.

These views are set out in the dialogue with a brevity which shows that Cicero did not think them to deserve more elaborate treatment, and in the reply of Cotta the most interesting feature is his statement of his own position. He was the Pontifex Maximus. The duty of his office, he said, required him to defend the religion established by law. He would be pleased if the existence of the Gods could be established, not only on the authority of tradition, but as a fact which admitted of proof; but it was surrounded with difficulties which Velleius had only increased. That mankind could worship beings who were and would be always indifferent to them, was hardly to be expected. The openly expressed scepticism of bolder reasoners, the exulting claim of Lucretius that the spectre of superstition had been forever exorcised by science, spared the necessity of graver argument.

The Epicurean being thus dismissed, the word was taken up by the Stoic Balbus. With

\* 'Anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem sine quâ nec intelligi quicquam nec disputari potest.'

the Epicurean, morality was enlightened self-interest. The Stoic believed in duty. To act rightly, to love justice, and truth, and purity, and to hate their opposites, were matters of absolute obligation to him. A law implied a law-giver; responsibility required a ruler, to whom an account would have to be rendered; the Stoic therefore looked about him in a very modern fashion for answers to popular objections to the truth of religion. If the age of miracles had ceased he found that miracles, portents, or prodigies were recorded in tradition; the instances of design in nature, the adaptation of means to ends in the structure and functions of animals, were evidence of an intelligent Creator; and the elaborate pains with which Cicero explains the Stoic position shows that at least he felt it to deserve respectful treatment. Balbus maintained the existence of the Gods to be an established truth of history. Castor and Pollux had appeared in the battle at the Lake Regillus. Sacrifices had been offered and accepted. The Decii had devoted themselves, and a victory had been won. Oracles had been delivered at Delphi and elsewhere, containing clear prophecies of future events. These events had afterwards taken place, and a foresight which was not to be accounted for by human sagacity was manifestly preternatural. In Italy again, although it had fallen lately into neglect, the art of divination had been practised from the earliest period, and too many instances could be produced of disaster from the neglect of divine injunctions so conveyed to admit of being explained away. The sacred chickens had refused to eat in the First Punic War. The Consul Claudius had cried impatiently that they should drink then, and had flung them into the water. The Roman fleet had been lost in consequence, and Claudius had been tried for impiety and executed. In the traditions of these things fable might have been

mixed with truth, but when all possible deductions had been made on the score of historic fallibility, sufficient evidence remained for an enlightened and reasonable belief.

Passing from tradition to natural philosophy, Balbus next appealed to the motion of the stars, and the regularity of the operations of nature. Posidonius, whom he called his friend, had constructed an orrery, in which the movements of the sun and moon and planets, and their relative positions throughout the year, were exactly represented. Anticipating literally Paley's illustration from the watch, Balbus asked whether, if this machine were exhibited in Scythia or Britain, the veriest savage could avoid perceiving that it was the work of a designing mind. Pursuing the same line of thought, and anticipating the Bridgewater treatises, he went in detail into the structure of plants and animals, and dwelt on the adaptation of their various organs to their method of life. The Stoics had interrogated nature in the same spirit as modern religious philosophers, and had arrived at the same conclusion. They believed themselves to have found a proof of contrivance, and therefore of a contriving Creator. But the real difficulty remained. Nature might have an intelligent Author, yet intelligence was nothing without morality; and if the evidences of design were abundant, yet evidences of moral government were as conspicuously absent. With ingenious boldness Balbus addressed himself to the central problem, and approached as closely, perhaps, as any mere philosopher has ever done to the only possible solution of it. Morality, when vigorously alive, sees farther than intellect, and provides unconsciously for intellectual difficulties. The Latins had extended their reverence beyond the mythological divinities, and had built temples to the moral virtues as the guardian spirits of mankind. Constancy and Faith, Valor and Wisdom, Chastity and Piety, had each their

separate altar, where human beings paid their orisons, and prayed for strength to overcome temptation. 'You complain,' said Balbus, 'that you can see no sign of an overruling Providence in the administration of the universe; the Virtues are Providence, and themselves constitute the moral government which you pretend that you cannot find. Justice may not be perfect; some crimes may be left unpunished, some good actions may be unrewarded. It is so with earthly governments, and may be so with the divine. It is enough that we see a tendency which may become stronger with time, and may be carried out further in later generations.'

In the close of his argument, he returns to the auguries. It was a historical fact that from immemorial time the Etruscans had supposed that they could read coming events in the entrails of sacrificed animals. On great occasions, with the utmost solemnity, and in the presence of the highest functionaries of the state, the body of a calf or a sheep had been gravely opened, and the most important actions had been undertaken, or laid aside, according to the conditions of the heart or liver of the dead animal. This was a plain matter of certainty. The experiment would not have been repeated for so long a time if the events had not corresponded to the indications so obtained. Even Tacitus, a century and a half later, could speak of these foreshadowings as still fully credited, and as apparently established by evidence. Balbus, however, was content with the fact, and laid little stress upon it. He did not profess to regard the blackened liver of a calf as caused by divine interposition; he regarded it merely as a natural phenomenon rising from some internal correspondence of things.

On these reasonings, with more of which in a modern form we are all familiar, the High Priest proceeded to comment at length, and



with more seriousness than he had shown in discussing the arguments of the Epicureans. He commenced with a peculiarly solemn reference to his own official position, and like Descartes, while doubting everything from the point of reason, he insisted that his private convictions remained unshaken, because they reposed on belief and authority. He was Pontifex (Pope), he repeated. He was appointed by the State to uphold the established creed and ceremonial. These he ever had maintained, and always would maintain, and no one, learned or unlearned, would succeed in shaking his faith. So far as the truth of the Roman religion was in question he should follow his predecessors in the papal chair, Coruncarius, Publius Scipio, and Scævola, and not Zeno, or Cleanthes, or Chrysippus. Caius Lælius, the augur, had more weight with him than the wisest philosophers of the porch. The ceremonial, the haruspiece, and the Sibylline books were the pillars of the Roman Commonwealth. The foundations of it had been laid in religion by Romulus and Numa, and by the immortal Gods alone it was sustained. That was his position as Pontifex.

‘You philosophers, however,’ Cotta went on, ‘appeal to reason. I myself believe without reason, *etiam nullâ ratione radditâ*. The authority of my ancestors is sufficient for me. But you reject authority, and you will have reason only. I must therefore set my reason against yours, and I tell you that you with your arguments make doubtful what without argument is not doubtful at all. Your appearance of Castor and Pollux at the Lake Regillus may be but a legend. It is unauthenticated by certain history. The Decii were probably only brave men who threw themselves among the enemy, knowing that their countrymen would follow. And what a character are you not attributing to the Gods when you represent them as beings whose favor must be purchased by the sacrifice

of good men ! You describe the Gods as all-perfect, and omniscient, and you suppose them to exist under conditions where no quality which we call good can possibly be found. Where there is no evil there can be no preference of good to evil. Where all is already known, there can be no active intelligence. Where wrong-doing is impossible, there is no justice ; no temperance where there is no temptation ; no valor where there is no evil to be overcome. The theogonies of Hesiod and Homer are too childish for belief, and when all is said, there remains the enigma, which you have not resolved : if the Gods exist, and if the world is ruled by them, why is it well with the wicked ? and why do the good fall into calamity ? The commonwealth and the family are ill ordered when virtue is not rewarded, and crime is not punished : so far as we can trace the action of the Gods no such distinction is made. Argue as you will, this is the fact. In the distribution of good and evil, so far as it is left to forces external to man, no question is asked about character. You say that we ought not to be surprised if the Gods do not punish every crime, because earthly governments do not. Where is the analogy ? Earthly governments fail for want of knowledge. You leave no such excuse for the Gods, for the Gods are assumed to be omniscient. You say that though the wicked man may himself escape, his crimes may be visited on his children. Wonderful justice ! What should we say of a commonwealth where the law condemned the son or grandson for the sins of his father ? In the system of nature there is no rule of a just God discernible. One event comes alike to all. Men, cities, nations, perish undeservedly, because, forsooth, God cannot attend to everything. And yet you expect us to pray to him ! It cannot be.

So far in substance the Pontiff Cotta ; and with Cotta's scepticism the dialogue ends. A

fourth speaker, especially if he could have had the light of later history to guide him, might have shown Cotta that his own foundations were as feeble as those which he overthrew. We, too, have heard of faith which rests upon authority, and dispenses with reason ; but what does authority rest upon ? Such a faith may prolong a sickly existence for one or more generations, but it cannot endure the buffets of practical life. Questions to which it can give no reasonable answer hang multiplying like barbed arrows in its side. The ceremonial becomes stereotyped. The faith resolves itself into words repeated without conviction. Packthread might as easily hold a giant gone insane, as arguments for the probable truth of the Pagan religion hold in check the wolfish appetites of unbelieving mankind. In Cicero's time the once God-fearing Latins had become a commonwealth of Atheists, in which chastity and innocence blushed to show them selves, and corruption had lost the consciousness of its own deformity. Three conquered continents lay at the feet of the Republic. The oligarchy and the democracy were snarling and fighting over their prey. Italy was torn with civil wars, and decimated by proscriptions. Ordered freedom was lost in anarchy, and the state was staggering in drunken frenzy. The senators sold justice, and great ladies sold their persons, to the highest bidder. The provinces were stripped to the bone by the prætors. The prætors spent their spoils in gluttony and bestiality. As to religion, and the respect which authority could command for it, Cotta's successor in the Pontificate was young Cæsar, notorious than for the dissoluteness of his habits, and for an intellect which for many years he appeared to disdain to use.

For the constitution, it had fallen into such extraordinary contempt, that Catiline, with a small knot of fashionable young men, had proposed to burn the city and kill the consuls and

half the patricians. Yet Rome was so conscious of its own worthlessness as to be almost incapable of indignation ; although the plot was discovered, and Catiline knew that it was discovered, he could venture to attend the Senate House, and sit and listen while the particulars of it were detailed by Cicero. He could walk out unmolested, continue his preparations at leisure, leave the city without an attempt at arrest, and put himself at the head of an open insurrection.

To this it had come in the first capital of the world, and the most advanced nation of it, because, in the Hebrew language, they had forgotten God. They had no belief remaining in any divine rule over them. The cement was gone which held society together, and the entire fabric of it had fallen in shapeless ruin. Some vast change was inevitable, some powerful reassertion of the elementary principles of authority and justice, or the enormous Roman empire would have burst like a bubble.

In recorded history no single man (perhaps with the exception of Mahomet) has produced effects so vast and so enduring as Julius Cæsar. It is the more remarkable that in no language, ancient or modern, is there any adequate biography of him. To Lucan he was an incarnation of Satan. Suetonius, the fullest authority on his early life, accepted and recorded every scandalous libel which was current in patrician coteries. To Suetonius the loose songs of the Roman soldiers were sufficient evidence to charge Cæsar with infamy. With as much reason similar accusations might be brought against Nelson or Collingwood, because, in loose affectionate talk, they were freely spoken of in the English fleet under the name which Johnson defines as a term of endearment among sailors. To Cicero Cæsar appeared at first as a young man of genius and fashion, who was wasting time and talents, while he was himself improving both. As the



talents showed themselves more unmistakably, and Cicero was obliged to allow that Cæsar's powers as an orator, when he cared to use them, were as great as his own, that his style as a writer was unmatched, that his influence almost without effort was growing, and, worse still, when it appeared that he was the advocate of the democracy, contempt and pity changed to fear and suspicion. And as Cæsar at last towered up above both him and all his contemporaries, Cicero came to dread and hate him, and sate approving in the Senate when he was murdered. Thus from Cicero, except in scattered glimpses, we gather no credible picture, and we are driven back to Cæsar himself, who in his 'Commentaries' has left the most lucid of all military narratives; but, except in the studied absence of self-glorification, and in a few sentences in which for a moment he allows us to see into his own inner nature, he leaves us scarcely better provided with the means of understanding him. Patrician constitutionalists, judging as men do by the event, were assured that he had early conceived an intention of overthrowing the republic; and that his object in obtaining his command in Gaul was merely to secure the support of an army to bring about his country's ruin. Nothing can be less likely. A conspirator would never have chosen so circuitous a road, or one so little tending, according to common laws of probability, to lead to his object. He was past forty before he began to show what was in him. May it not have been rather that he remained in Rome, hoping that some useful career might open for him, till the steady growing anarchy and corruption taught him that nothing was to be looked for there? Life was slipping away, and he wished to accomplish something memorable before he died. The Germans were pouring in over the Rhine. But for Cæsar Ariovistus might have been an Alaric, and Europe might have been Teutonized

four centuries before its time. In ten years Cæsar had forced back the Germans into their forests. He had invaded Britain. Gaul he had not merely overrun with his armies and coerced into submission, but he had won the affection of the people whom he had subdued. The Gauls became an integral part of the Roman nation, and infused new vitality into the brain and sinew of the empire. For such a service the reward which the Roman aristocracy considered him to deserve was degradation, dishonor, and afterwards, of course, death. The common sense of mankind repudiated the enormous injustice. His adoring legions, instead of demanding pay to remain on his side, contributed out of their own purses the expenses of the wars which followed. The aristocracy died hard. The flower of them fell at Pharsalia. With the degrading support of the Numidian chiefs, they fought through a fresh campaign in Africa. When Cato had fallen on his sword at Utica, the scattered fragments of Pompey's and Scipio's armies drifted into Spain, and threw their last stake in a desperate struggle upon the Ebro. Then it was over, The Republican constitution of Rome had fallen, destroyed by its own vices. Cæsar was sole sovereign of the civilized world; and so effectively the work was accomplished that his own death could not undo it. Order and authority were re-established under a military empire, and the Roman dominion which had been on the edge of dissolution, received a new lease of existence. Was it to be wondered at if men said that the doer of such an exploit was something more than man? Cæsar had found the world going to pieces in madness and corruption. All that mankind had gained from the beginning of recorded time, all that Greece had bequeathed of art and culture, all the fruits of the long struggles of Rome to coerce unwilling barbarians into obedience to law, was on the brink of perishing. The hu-

man race might have fallen back into primeval savagery. Cæsar, by his own resolute will, had taken anarchy by the throat and destroyed it. Quirinus the first founder of Rome, was called a God. Was there not here a greater than Quirinus? Philosophers had cried despairingly that the Gods (if Gods existed) had no care for man. Had not a living God come among them in the form of man? Was not Cæsar a God?

There is a doubt whether Cæsar himself, in his own lifetime, permitted the indulgence of these fancies. Probably not. So calm, so rational an intellect was not so easily intoxicated, nor was it like him to encourage, for political reasons, any lying exaggerations. Seutonius says that he allowed honors to be paid to him—*ampliora humano fastigio*—that temples were raised to him, with sacrificing priests, and his own image above the altars. Tacitus, a far better authority, says that Nero was the first of the Cæsars who was officially recognized as a God before his death, ‘the Emperors not hitherto receiving this distinction until their sojourn upon earth was ended.’\* So far as can be seen, Cæsar had personally no religious convictions whatever. He had no belief in a future life. He considered death to be the limit of human existence, and on existence in the present life he set but little value. When warned of the conspiracy to kill him, he refused to take precautions. He had lived long enough, and did not care to continue. Whatever, however, might have been his own thoughts upon the subject, the popular feeling was not to be restrained. He was enrolled among the twelve Gods. The month of July, which still bears his name, was allotted to him in the Fasti. His successor was but carrying out the universal wishes of the army and the

\* ‘Nam Deūm honor Principi non ante habetur quam agere inter homines desierit,—’ Tacitus’ *Annals*, lib. xv., cap. 74.

people when he built a temple to him and instituted a formal service there. At the time of his consecration a brilliant and unfamiliar star was seen for several nights in the sky, and was generally regarded as the spirit of Cæsar. That he had been received up into heaven, Suetonius says, was not merely a figure of speech, but the real conviction of mankind.

Augustus, who had been brought up by Cæsar, shared probably in his uncle's opinions on these subjects. Legend said that, when a young man, Augustus had made one of a famous supper party—Cœna—'supper of the twelve Gods'—where each guest had represented a God or Goddess, and Augustus had personated Apollo.

The authority was only certain *notissimi versus*—verses well known in Rome a hundred years after. The story is out of character with Augustus, and is probably a lie.\*

Cæsar had named him his heir, with a just insight into his extraordinary qualities. He returned the confidence which had been placed in him with a profound veneration to Cæsar's memory; and when the first confusion was over which followed Cæsar's death, when the attempt to re-establish the constitution had utterly failed, and the popular will had ratified Cæsar's disposition and raised him to the throne, Augustus set himself with a feeling of sacred obligation to punish the murderers. In three years not one of the whole of them survived: Brutus, Cassius, Casca, all were gone—some killed, some falling by their own hands; Cicero himself, an accomplice though not an actor, not escaping, having no longer

\* Cum primum istorum conduxit mensa Choragum,  
Sexque Deos vidit Mallia sexque Deas,  
Impia dum Phœbi Cæsar mendacia ludit,  
Dum nova Divorum cœnat adulteria,  
Omnia se a terris tunc numina declinârunt  
Fugit et auratos Jupiter ipse toros.  
Suetonius, '*De Vitâ Octavii.*'



Cæsar to protect him. *Scribunt quidam*, says Suetonius, not undertaking, however, to vouch for their accuracy, that, on the Ides of March, after the fall of Perusia, three hundred selected prisoners were sacrificed at an altar to Divus Julius. Augustus had no predilection for melodrama. If the story is true, it was an extraordinary illustration of the fanaticism to which he was compelled to condescend. More probably a severe example was made of the Perusians. Some passionate partisan may have said that the victims were offered to the manes of the Dictator, and a metaphor, as often happens, may have passed into a fact.

However this may be, Augustus was no sooner settled in the purple than he endeavored to bury the recollections of the civil war in a general amnesty. Society had grown ashamed of its orgies, and returned to simpler habits of life, and the emperor led the way in the reform. Like Charles V., Augustus banished plate from his household, and was served with the plainest food on the plainest earthenware. He slept on a truckle bed without hangings. His furniture was *vix privatæ elegantiae*, scarcely fine enough for a private gentleman. His dress was homespun, not distinguishable from the dresses of his attendants, and to emphasize the example, was manufactured by the Empress and his daughter. With the improvement in manners there set in also one of those periodical revivals of religious sentiment with which history at such times is familiar. Augustus, either from policy or because the feelings which could influence Horace had also influenced him, encouraged the symptoms of recovering piety. Like his uncle he was Pontifex Maximus; but unlike him he made his office a reality. Cæsar had defied auguries, Augustus never ventured an important act without consulting the haruspices. His name, according to Suetonius, he derived from his attention to the flight of birds—*tanquam ab avium gestis*

—the birds, as inhabitants of the air, being the supposed messengers between earth and sky. If the etymology is incorrect, the suggestion of it is an evidence of the popular belief in this feature of the imperial character. He was punctilious in each and all of his religious observances. He reformed the priesthood, he revised the canon of the Sibylline books, and destroyed the apocryphal additions. He held, like Cotta, to the traditions of his fathers, looked unfavorably on heresies and new opinions, and forbade the novel forms of worship which with the turn of fashion were coming in from the East.

For himself, notwithstanding the language addressed to him by Horace, he declined, while he was alive, any public recognition of his superhuman qualities. He did not permit himself to be addressed as Dominus or Lord.\* No shrines or temples were erected to him in Rome, and in the provinces only in connection with the genius of the empire. On public buildings at Ephesus, he is found, from inscriptions on recently discovered buildings there, to have been described by the singular title Υἱὸς Θεοῦ, 'Son of God.' It is curious to consider that St. Paul must have seen these words there. The idea of the Sonship was already not unfamiliar. Nevertheless, notwithstanding his modesty, it is certain that throughout the Roman dominions Augustus was regarded, not only as the Son of God, but as an incarnation of God—a *præsens Divus*, a second revelation in the flesh of the reality of the celestial powers; and during his long reign the harassed peasant, who at last could till his farm and eat his bread in safety, poured libations with unhesitating faith to the divinity of the Emperor. On his death the popular belief received official ratification. In the Fasti he was placed next to Julius. The uncle and nephew became

\* 'Domino appellationem ut maledictum et approbrium semper exhorruit.'

the tutelary deities of the fairest months in the year. Legends gathered about his history. He was found to have been born of a virgin. His mother had conceived him in a vision in the Temple of Apollo. The place of his nativity was held sacred. No curious visitor was allowed to intrude there. No one might enter, except to pray. A still more remarkable story was believed in Rome in Suetonius' time, on the authority of Julius Marathus, which it is difficult to suppose was not in some way connected with the Gospel history. A few months before his birth a prodigy was observed, which the augurs interpreted to mean that a child was coming into the world who was to be King of Rome. The Senate passed a vote that no infant born in that year should be allowed to live.\*

Any superstition is tolerable so long as it is sincerely believed, so long as it is a motive to moral conduct, and makes men morally better than they would have been without it. Under Augustus Cæsar the language of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue was scarcely more than a hyperbole. Society, in the last pangs of dissolution, had been restored to life, and if the Divine rule over the world be a rule of justice, the public administration under the second Cæsar must have seemed, when compared with the age which preceded it, like the return of Astræa. And again, if we look at the ulterior purposes of Providence, it was the consolidation of the empire, the establishment of peace, order, and a common government round the basin of the Mediterranean, which enabled the Apostles to carry Christianity through the world, and to

\* 'Auctor est Julius Marathus ante paucos quam nasceretur menses prodigium Romæ factum publice quo denuntiabatur regem populi Romani naturam parturire. Senatum exterritum censuisse ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur: eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret, curâsse ne senatûs consultum ad ærarium deferatur.'—Suetonius, *De Vitâ Octavii*, cap. 94.

organize a Catholic Church; while the chief difficulties were already removed which would have interfered with the acceptance of the Christian creed. Already the Roman world believed that a Son of God who was himself God had been born upon earth of a human mother and a Divine Father, that he had reigned as a king, that he had established his dominion over mankind, and that after his death he had gone back to Heaven, from which he had descended, there to remain forever.

It was in no figure of speech that St. Paul spoke of the secular power as ordained of God. So far as the power was the instrument of justice, so far as it was an instrument of Providence, it was the power of God; and yet a brief trial sufficed to exhaust the divinity of the imperial purple. The general administration continued to be tolerable for centuries; but the imperial dignity tended to become hereditary; to be born to mere earthly greatness is a severe trial; and the youth never existed who could be educated uninjured in the belief that he was more than a man. When Herod spoke, the people said it was the voice of God, and he was smitten with worms because he gave not God the glory. The younger Cæsars were smitten with the genius of wickedness, as a rebuke even more significant to the unpermitted and audacious assumption. Tiberius and Claudius were neither of them born in the purple, and however atrocious their conduct, their crimes were not traceable to their pretensions to divinity. Tiberius was a man of science and a fatalist,\* and, amidst his enormous vices, did not pretend to powers of which he disbelieved the existence. Claudius was a miserable pedant, whom Augustus had considered unfit for any higher office than that of a chief priest (*agurale sacerdotium*), and when Claudius was

\* Circa Deos ac religiones negligentior quippe addictus mathematicæ, persuasionisque plenus cuncta fato agi.'—Suetonius.



made a God at his death, the universal ridicule showed that already the divinity of the Cæsars was passing into a jest. It had hardly survived Caligula. Caligula, the son of Germanicus, who, if bred as a soldier, might have been a useful centurion, being brought up a Cæsar, was the strangest figure which ever sat upon a European throne. He was a savage, and he knew it. When they told him he was a God, in grotesque mockery of himself and his instructors he challenged Jupiter Capitolinus to fight, and Jupiter not responding, he took the head from his statue and replaced it with his own. He stood on the temple steps and bade the people pray to him. He appointed a chapter of priests to offer sacrifices to him, the choicest that could be found (*excogitatissimas hostias*), and either in servility or in the same spirit of wild riot, the patricians contended for the honor of admission to the extraordinary order.

The translation of Claudius 'among the pumpkins' was another step downwards; but worse was to come. Claudius had been more sinned against than sinning. Caligula had a trait of humor in him. His profanities had been expressions rather of his contempt for the baseness of the court, than of any conceit of his own greatness. It remained for Nero, the pupil of Seneca, the accomplished artist, poet, painter, sculptor, musician, public singer; the sentimentalist, who sighed when called to sign a death-warrant, and wished that he had never learned to write; who, when told that three legions had revolted, said that he would recover them to their allegiance with his tears—reserved for him to exhibit, as a *præsense Divus*, the most detestable qualities which have been ever witnessed in combination in any human being. For Nero exhausted the list of possible enormities, leaving not one crime unperpetrated of which man is capable, and always in the most hideous of forms. To make his wickedness complete, he was without

the temptation of violent appetites; which, in reducing man to a beast, give him in some degree the excuses of a beast. He was cruel, without being naturally ferocious; he was depraved, yet he had little capacity for sensual enjoyment; and, with intellect sufficient to know what was good, he chose evil from deliberate preference of it.

A famous French actress watched by deathbeds in the hospitals, that she might study the art of expiring on the stage. The bolder Nero committed incest with his mother that he might realise the sensations of Œdipus, and murdered her that he might comprehend the situation of Orestes. Under Nero's fearful example the imperial court of Rome became a gilded brothel. Chastity was turned into a jest, vice was virtue, and fame lay in excess of infamy. The wisest sunk to the level of the worst. Seneca composed a vindication of the assassination of Agrippina, accusing her of having conspired against her son. The Senate decreed a thanksgiving to the Gods for Nero's deliverance from Agrippina's treachery. The few honorable men, like Pætus Thrasea and Soranus, who refused to follow with the stream, were made away with; as if the emperor desired, in the tremendous language of Tacitus, *virtutem ipsam excindere*—to cut out virtue itself by the roots; and with a yet stranger appropriateness than even Tacitus himself could recognize, when Nero had set Rome on fire, he selected the Christian converts as scapegoats for his guilt. He smeared them with pitch, and set them to blaze as torches in his gardens to light his midnight revels. What those revels were no modern language can decently reveal. In a torchlight festival on Agrippa's lake, the noblest ladies in Rome appeared as naked prostitutes, the emperor sailing up and down among them in his barge. Tacitus must tell the rest in his own words: *Ipse per licita atque illicita fœdatus nihil flagitii reliquerat quo corruptior*

*ageret, nisi paucos post dies nui ex illo contaminatorum grege cui nomen Pythagoræ fuit in modum solemniium conjugiorum denupsisset. Inditum Imperatori flammeum—visi auspices—dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales. Cuncta denique spectata quæ etiam in fœmina nox operit.* (Tacit. Ann. 15, 37.)

After these outrages it seems a desecration of a sacred word to speak of Nero in connection with religion ; yet it was Nero's destiny in this world to fulfil the measure of perfect infamy. As he had destroyed virtue, one further step was necessary—to destroy the belief in any source of virtue. He was an artist, as was said : *Qualis artifex pereo* were his words when he was dying. He was without conscience and therefore could have no reverence. He was fearless, and had no superstition. Belief of his own he had none, save for a time in the Syrian goddess of indecency, to whom he was soon worse than faithless.\* The Syrian Goddess being repudiated, his object of worship was afterwards a female statuette (*icuncula puellaris*). He had some notion of fate ; for fate, he had a strange imagination, was to make him one day 'King of the Jews.' But Nero was his own God and maker of Gods, and belief in God became impossible when Nero was regarded as a personation of him. On medals and in public instruments he solemnly assumed the name of Jupiter. He, too, had his temples and his priests. He had murdered his wife Octavia ; he afterwards kicked to death his mistress Poppæa ; but while Poppæa was in favor she shared his divine honors with him, and a child which she bore to him was to have been a God too, had it not unfortunately died.

To this pass the world had come in the kingdom of heaven upon earth which was to

\* 'Religionum usque quaque contemptor, præter unius Deæ Syriæ. Hanc mox ita sprexit ut urinâ contaminaret.'—Suetonius, *De Vitâ Neronis*.

have been realized by the divinity of the Cæsars. It is startling to remember that Nero was the Cæsar to whom St. Paul appealed, that it was in the Rome of Nero that St. Paul dwelt two years in his own house, that it was in the household of Nero that he found or made converts to Christianity. The parricides, the incests, the wholesale murders, the 'abomination of desolation' in the polluted saloons of the palace, were actually witnessed by persons with whom he was in daily intercourse. St. Paul with his own eyes may have seen 'the son of perdition sitting in the temple of God, showing that he was God,' and we need go no further to look for his meaning. Yet in his Epistles written from Rome he says little of these things. Those words are perhaps his only allusion to them.

The administration of Augustus was the most perfect system of secular government ever known, and the attributes assigned to Augustus were the apotheosis of it. The principle of Augustus was the establishment of law and order, of justice and decency of conduct. Of the heroic virtues, or even the modest virtues of purity and sense of moral responsibility, such a system knew nothing, and offered no motive for moral enthusiasm. Order and law and decency are the body of society, but are a body without a soul; and, without a soul, the body, however vigorous its sinews, must die and go to corruption. Human improvement is from within outwards. A state which can endure must be composed of members who all in their way understand what duty means and endeavor to do it. Duty implies genuine belief in some sovereign spiritual power. Spiritual regeneration comes first, moral after it, political and social last. To reverse the order is to plant a flower which has been cut from its natural stem, which can bloom but for a day and die.

The ways of Providence are obscure and



pérplexing, but scenes such as those which Rome had witnessed under Nero are not acted on this planet in the most neglected condition of it without retribution. Nero perished miserably, and on the accursed city which had sinned with him the wrath of Heaven, or destiny, or nature, or whatever it may be called, was not long in falling. We read in the Roman historians of military revolutions, of three emperors enthroned and killed in less than as many years, of provinces wasted and cities stormed and burnt. The page before us is stained with no blood : slayers and slain, conquerors and conquered, are words, and words only. The events recorded are far off, and stir no longer any emotions of terror or pity. Yet those years were an outpouring of the wrath of the Almighty on polluted Italy. The armies of the several frontiers demanded the purple for their favorite commanders, and gathered down upon the peninsula to make good their furious pleasure. They came from Spain and from the Rhine, from the Danube, from Britain, from the Euphrates, from Egypt. The empire was like an oak, hollow at the heart, but vigorous in the branches. The legions, recruited no longer from the Latin peasants, were filled with Gauls and Spaniards, Thracians and Germans—fierce animals, half tamed by military discipline, but with the savage nature boiling out when the rein was slackened. With no common purpose, except perhaps some resolution that the accursed scenes which they heard reported from Rome should come to an end, those nearest at hand streamed down over the passes of the Alps. Others followed. Town after town was sacked and given to the flames. The Imperial city, the harlot of the seven hills, the mother of iniquities, was taken and retaken among the partisans of rival claimants for the purple. The Capitol was burnt, the streets and gardens were littered for weeks or months with unburied

bodies. Debauched legionaries rioted in the palaces of the nobles till indulgence had broken their strength, and other wild bands burst in to tear the spoil from them. A Christian, with a real belief, must have seen in this tremendous visitation the immediate hand of Providence, and, if he was a person of any imaginative intelligence, the description of the opening of the seals in the vision of St. John would not seem an exaggerated description of the history of those fearful years. That vision may have had other meanings. No one can say certainly to what St. John refers. Yet metaphor might be piled on metaphor, and image upon image, and all would have been too little to have expressed the feelings likely to have been experienced in that deluge of fire and blood by a Christian who had escaped alive from the torch festival of Nero.

It had been prophesied that salvation was to come from the East. The eyes of the Roman world were turned with passionate longing to Vespasian and the army of Syria. That Vespasian had been 'marked as extraordinary,' had been proved by miracles which he was reluctantly persuaded to attempt in Alexandria, and which he had succeeded in accomplishing. A blind man was restored to sight, and a man with a disabled hand had recovered the use of it under circumstances which curiously resemble these of the Gospel miracles.\* His future

\* 'E plebe Alexandrinâ quidam oculorum tabe notus genua ejus advolvitur, remedium cæcitatæ exposcens gemitu, monitu Serapidis Dei quem dedita superstitionibus gens ante alios colit: precabaturque principem ut genas et oculorum orbes dignaretur respergere oris excremento. Alius, manum æger, eodem Deo auctore, ut pede ac vestigio Cæsaris calcaretur orabat. Vespasianus primo irridere, aspernari, atque illis instantibus modo famam vanitatis metuere, modo obsecratione ipsorum et vocibus adulantium in spem induci: postremo ætimari a medicis jubet an talis cæcitas ac debilitas ope humanâ superabiles forent. Medici varie disserere. Huic non exesam vim luminis, et reducturam si pellerentur obstantia; illi elapsos in pravum artus si salubris vis adhibeatur posse

greatness had been foretold to him by a prophet on Mount Carmel. He was first saluted emperor by the legions of Cæsarea. If Cornelius the Centurion, the first Gentile convert, had not died in the short interval after St. Peter's visit to him, he, it is reasonable to suppose, was one of the actors in the revolution. Vespasian was welcomed to the purple with acclamation, and a time was found again for 'frighted peace to pant.' The race of the Cæsars was gone, their glory and their crimes alike ended, and a more modest era again commenced. The Fasti, *adulatione temporum fœdati*, were purged of their enormous additions. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was rebuilt with peculiar solemnity. The impious rites were abolished, sacrifices and litanies were offered once more to the old accredited Gods and Goddesses, and a wet sponge was drawn over the hideous past. After the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, the two million Jews who were dispersed over the empire contributed the annual double drachma, previously remitted to the High Priest, to the sacred edifices at Rome. Once more there was decency and order, and men could live and breathe with some shadow of self-respect. Thus were secured eighty more years (with intervals of relapse) of peace, equitable government, and moderate manners, a renewal and prolongation in a weakened form of the era of Augustus; eighty years which Gibbon considered to have been, on the whole, the happiest which mankind have ever experienced.

But this was all. The dead Gods could be

integrari. Id fortasse cordi Diis, et divino ministerio principem electum. Denique patrati remedii gloriam Cæsarem, irriti ludibrium penes miseros fore. Igitur Vespasianus, cuncta fortunâ suæ patere atus nec quicquam ultra incredibile, læto ipse vultu, erectâ quæ adstabat multitudine jussa exsequitur. Statim conversa ad usum manus, ac cæco re luxit dies. Utrumque qui interfuere nunc quoque mem orant, postquam nallum mundacio pretitum.'—Tacit. *Hist.*, lib. iv., c. 81.

replaced in the temples. The mythology was made endurable for a time by allegoric interpretations. But belief had become impossible forever. And again the question rose: Where was Providence? what signs could be found of a divine rule? Not in the emperors. After the experience of Nero, that illusion was no longer possible. The Cæsars themselves required to be explained and accounted for in a universe presided over by a moral power. The distracted provincials had to be told that a bad emperor was a natural calamity, like tempests or plagues. They must bear with him and hope for a change.\* On thinking minds, therefore, the problem returned, 'Where was the promise of his coming?' Why was it well with the wicked? Why were the good allowed to suffer? What was the nature of the rule under which the universe was governed after all? Tacitus wavered between chance and fate.† The mocking spirit in Lucian asks Jupiter if ever once since he came to the throne he had attempted to discriminate between good and bad, and apportion reward to merit, and dares him to mention one such instance. Some there were, so Tacitus says, who tried to believe that the popular notions of good and evil might be mistaken; that men might suffer and yet be happy, be prosperous and yet be miserable. But this was paradox. No real conviction could be based on obscure pos-

\* Thus Cerealis, the prefect of Northern Gaul, said at Treves, when Vitellius was emperor: 'Quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres et cætera naturæ mala, ita luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate. Vitia erunt, donec homines: sed neque hæc continua et meliorum interventu pensantur.'—Tacit. *Hist.*, lib. iv., c. 74.

† 'Sed mihi hæc atque talia audienti in incerto iudicium est, fatone res mortalium et necessitate immutabili an forte volvantur. Quippe sapientissimos veterum, quique sectam eorum æmulantur, diversos reperies, ac multis insitam opinionem non initia nostri, non finem, non denique homines Diis curæ; ideo creberrime tristitia in bonos, læta apud deteriores esse.'—Tac. *Annals*, vi.,



sibilities; and the great Roman world went upon its way back into vice, back into madness and atheism, till the dead shell fell off, and a living Christian Church, grown to imperial stature, was found standing on the ruins of the constitution of the Cæsars.

Why was it well with the wicked? The theology of paganism could give no answer, for the 'wealth' of paganism was the 'wealth' of the modern Englishman—money and broad lands and health to enjoy them—and the most pious disposition to believe could not blind itself to the principles on which wealth of this kind was distributed. Paganism had allotted as the special dominion of the Gods the natural forces which were beyond man's control. In the operation of these forces there was no trace of a moral Governor, and men who refused to lie looked the truth in the face and acknowledged it. Moral government, which openly and visibly rewarded merit and punished vice and crime, extended precisely so far as the authority of man extended and no further. The oracles, the legendary tales, the devout imaginations of what the Gods had done in the old times, the prophecies of what the Gods would do in the future, these would no longer satisfy. The facts of experience were too stern to be trifled with. The struggling conscience had demanded reality, and had built temples to Divus Cæsar. This, too, had not availed. A society constructed like that of the Cæsars, on the policeman and economic laws, is a body without life; and by an everlasting law of nature, which men may quarrel with, may deny to exist, yet from which they can no more escape than they can escape from their own dissolution, such a society, such a kingdom of this world, will become a kingdom of the Devil.

What was the truth, then? What was this inexorable sphinx which sat by the highway of humanity, propounding its enigma and devour-

ing every one who could not divine the answer ? In the most despised of the Roman provinces, among groups of peasants and fishermen, on the shores of a Galilean lake, the answer had been given, and there, in that remote and humble region, a new life had begun for mankind. They had looked for a union of God with man. They thought that they had found it in Cæsar. Divided from Cæsar by the whole diameter of society, they found it at last in the Carpenter of Nazareth. The kingdom of Cæsar was a kingdom over the world ; the kingdom of Christ was a kingdom in the heart of man.

I am a King, he said (if it be permitted to paraphrase his words). I bid you follow me and be my servants ; but my kingdom is not such a kingdom as you look for. It is the kingdom of God. The Philosophers of the world say there is no kingdom of God, because no justice can be found in the apportionment of good and evil. What the world calls good is not the fit reward of human virtue. What the world calls evil is not the punishment of sin. The Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, were not sinners above other Galileans. Suffering, you say, if it is just, must be a punishment of sin, and you ask where the sin lay when a man was born blind ? Does this perplex you ? Do you say God is indifferent ? I bid you find rather in this indifference an example for yourselves to imitate. Your Father in heaven makes his rain to fall on the just and the unjust, and is good to the unthankful and the evil. Be you like Him. The kingdom of God is within you. If you would enter it, put away your false measure of good and evil ; the road into that kingdom is through the Cross. I will not make you great. I will not give you honors, and lands, and gold and jewels. I will promise you no immunity from disease, or suffering, or death. To these things the Gentiles look, and when they are not awarded, on

principles which they call just, they doubt if there is any God in heaven. These are not the wages which you will earn in my service. Come to me and I will make you good men. I will make you rulers over your own selfishness, your own appetites and lusts. I will set you free from sin. Make this your object, to be free from sin, to lead pure and true and honorable lives. I will then be with you. I will dwell in you. I will give you a peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. I will be a well of water in you, springing up into everlasting life. You wish for prosperity, you wish for pleasure, you wish for the world's good things. But prosperity will be no help to you in the conquest of yourselves. It may rather be a hindrance. Sorrow and suffering are not evils. They are the school in which you may learn self-command. The empire to which I bid you aspire is higher than the Cæsar's. It is the empire over your own hearts. The reward I offer you is greater than the purple. It is the redemption of your own character. This is the Providence of God, for which you looked and failed to find it. And it is just to the smallest fibre of it. External things obey the laws assigned to them. The moral Ruler whom you desire to know is not to be found by looking at these. He is here; he is in the heart of man. He is in me who now speak to you. He will be in you if you struggle to obey him and to do his will. To be happy is not the purpose for which you are placed in this world. Examine your own hearts. Ask your conscience and it will answer you. Were the choice offered you, whether you would be prosperous and wicked, or whether your life should be a life of prolonged misfortune, and you should rise out of it purified and ennobled, every one of you knows the answer which he ought to give. Therefore your complaint, that it is well with the wicked, and that the good are afflicted, is confuted out of your

own lips. You would not change condition with the wicked, however prosperous they may seem, unless you are yourself wicked. To that man life has been most kind whose character it has trained most nearly to perfection.

Desire first, to be good men—true in word, just in action, pure in spirit. Seek these, whatever else befall you. So you will know God, whom you have sought and could not find. So out of men who have life in them shall grow a society that has life, and the kingdom, of the world shall be made in truth a kingdom of God.













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